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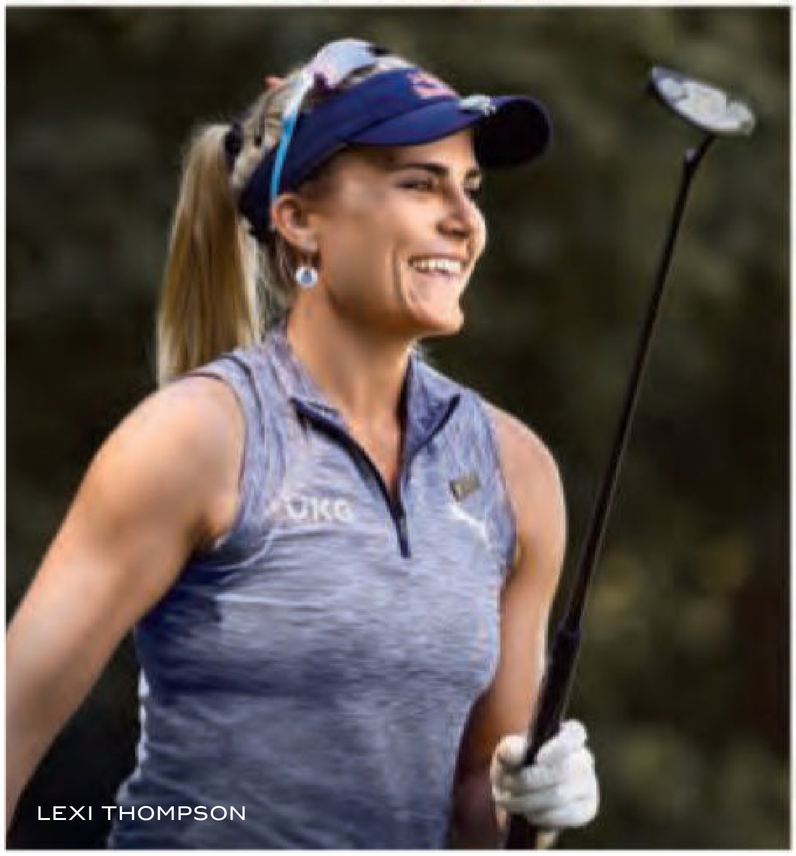
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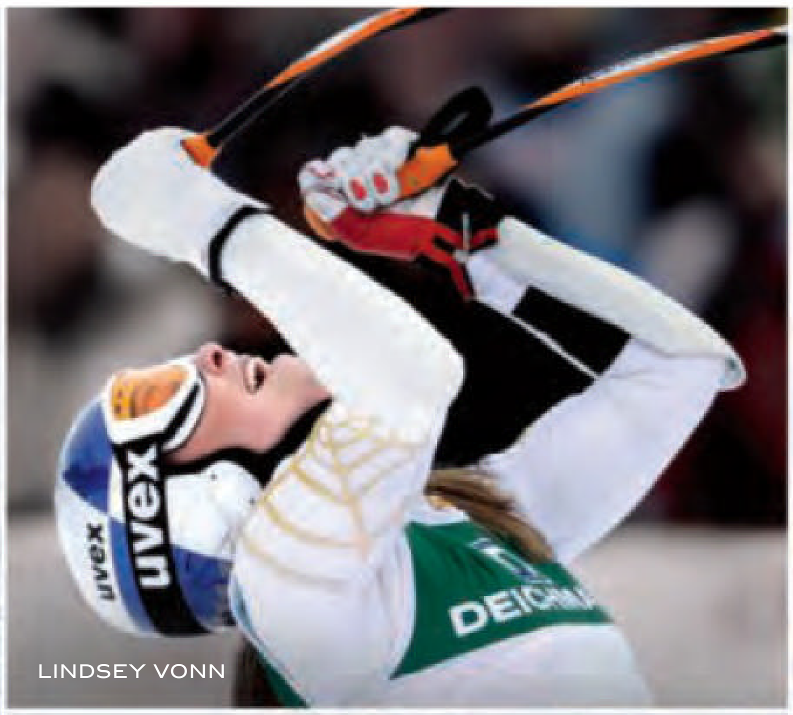
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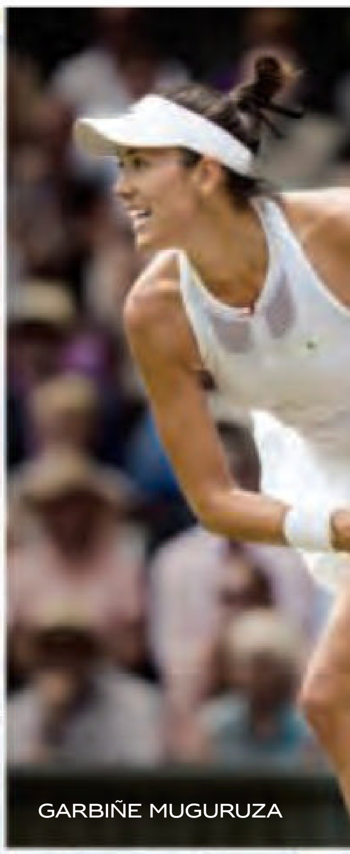
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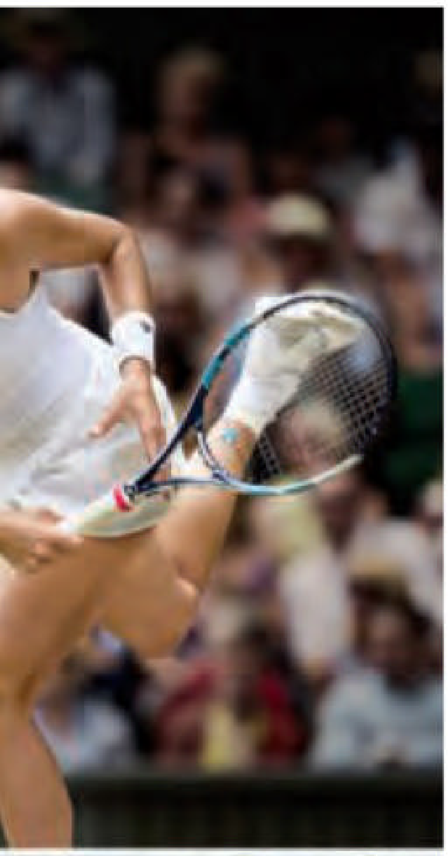

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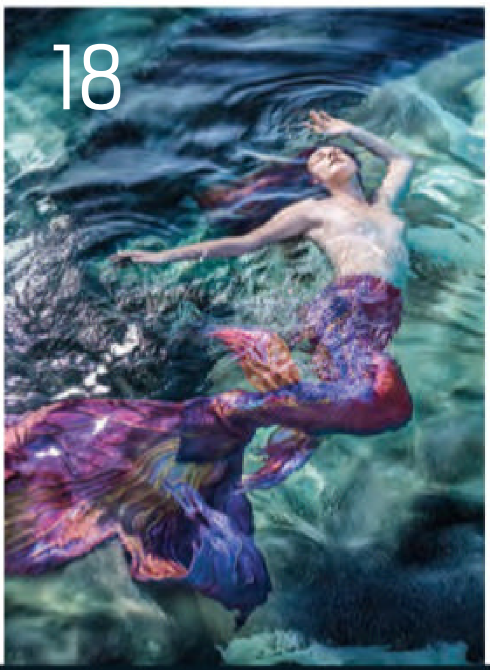

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PORTRAITS BY DAVID KAWAI

PHOTOGRAPHY BY DAVID KAWAI (FUTURE OF DOWNTOWN); CHRISTIAN LALONDE - PHOTOLUXSTUDIOS.COM (MERMAID)

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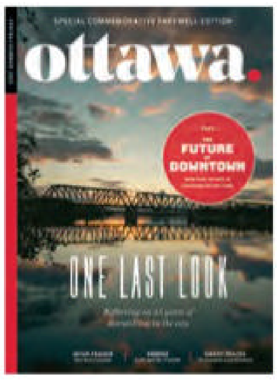

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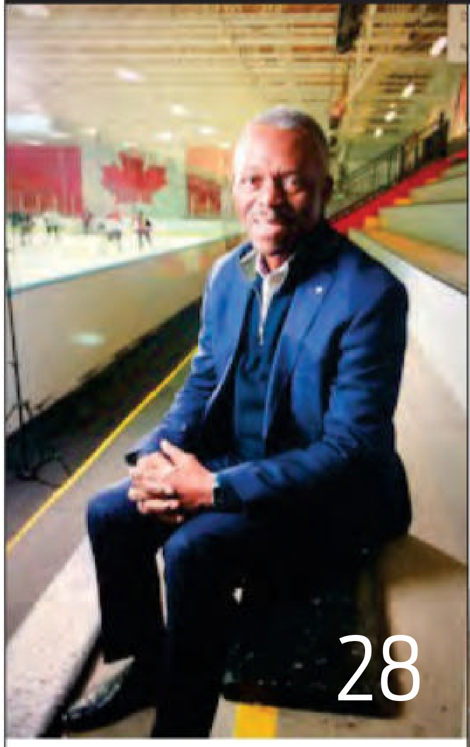

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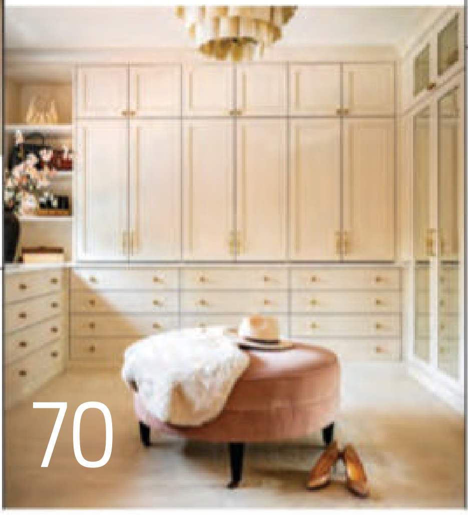

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This Issue | By Robert Hiltz

You're holding in your hands the last issue of *Ottawa Magazine.*

The economics of print media are not what they once were. Unfortunately, this magazine is another publication that has to say farewell.

It is, of course, bittersweet. For the last quarter-century, this magazine brought a deeper look at this city, its culture, and its food. At the heart of what we do were the people of this city.

Along the way we've tried to showcase young writers looking to make their start. The look of this magazine has always been key; we've always prided ourselves in giving local photographers and illustrators a chance to see their work published. One of the great joys of working for this publication has been the ability to bring new voices and new eyes to the community.

Through it all, we've been able to highlight what makes this city great, and where it falls short.

I'm afraid in this issue that you'll have to forgive a bit of self-indulgence on our part. We're fortunate to get to say one last goodbye before we head off into the sunset.

In the following pages you'll read remembrances from longtime contributors reflecting on their most memorable projects. Our former publishers share what the magazine has meant to them and the community over the years. We asked a few of our longtime photographers to choose a favourite project, and we run them big, like only a magazine can do.

I want to give a special thanks to the hard work of the core OM team: Dayanti Karunaratne, Jeff Eustace, and Julia Wallace. This magazine would not be possible without the hard work and dedication of these three. They are the beating heart of OM, whose efforts make this the beautiful publication that it is. I owe them all a debt of gratitude for bringing me into the fold.

But this isn't just an issue about the magazine.

Simon Gardner took a trip to a new outpatient clinic run by the Royal Ottawa for people with schizophrenia to find out how this new model of mental health service helps the community.

We've got plenty of food and drink coverage, including a piece by Hattie Klotz about what the city's museums are doing right, and what they could be doing better.

Nearly a year after the derecho swept through town, what lessons have been learned, and how can we prepare better? Hannah Sabourin looks back at the epic storm of May 2022 and ahead to a future of increasing extreme weather events.

Our main feature focuses on the future of the city's downtown area. So much has changed in how people live and work in the last few years, and those changes are felt the strongest in the heart of the city. We have features on transforming office towers into housing, how hotels are coping in this new era, insight from four households on what they love about living downtown, and more.

There is, of course, an irony in our last issue focusing on the future of the city, as now that future is one without this magazine.

Over the years we've tried to set out a vision for the city that is hopeful. One that sees this town not as a dull government town, but a vibrant and thriving community. It is not without flaws, but it has the capacity to be great.

Pushing toward a greater future has always been our goal. The motto of this magazine is to inspire the ambition that shapes this city's future. That duty falls now to you, dear reader.

We hope this magazine has meant as much to the city as it has to us.

Robert Hiltz, **MANAGING EDITOR**

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Ottawa Magazine is published four times a year by St. Joseph Communications. Telephone 613-230-0333. Fax 613-230-4441. E-mail: info@stjosephmedia.com. Subscription rates: one year, $27 plus HST. To update or change your subscription address, please send your new address with your old address to Subscription Department, Ottawa Magazine, 201-130 Albert St., Ottawa, Ontario K1P 5G4 or call toll-free: 1-833-632-0833. Single copies: $6.95 plus HST. Printed by St. Joseph Print Group. (ISSN 1480-7823)

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CONSULTING EDITOR **Dayanti Karunaratne**

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Lasting Impacts

The people behind *Ottawa Magazine* reflect on 25 years

As anyone who has spent time making magazines can attest, there is so much more to every page than the words and pictures that made the final cut. Here, we asked people who spent years — even decades — at *Ottawa Magazine* to recall a favourite project, experience, or moment that had a lasting impact on them as a person. Because even as the magazine prints its last issue, these connections, memories, and achievements have made a lasting impression not only on those directly involved, but on the city itself

The 10th Anniversary Issue is very memorable for me. Working on that issue was a chance to look back over past issues and see how far we had come. The city had embraced the magazine, trusting us to cover the issues that needed to be discussed, and showcasing the best the city had to offer. We ordered a special cake from The Girl with the Most Cake, and it was spectacular! A treat for both the eyes and the palate. A large paint-by-number was made of the cake for guests to paint at the celebrations we held at the Cordon Bleu Cooking School that spring. I spent an afternoon with Amanda Forsyth in the photographer's studio shooting the cover. She brought champagne. Not only were we celebrating a milestone in the life of the magazine, but I was celebrating my 50th birthday. Celebrations all 'round!

Jane Corbett,
Art director, 1998 - 2017

■ For me, photography is an opportunity to meet people in their environments and tell their stories. Throughout the years, *Ottawa Magazine* gave me the opportunity to photograph many amazing spaces and portray our city's vibrant community. It is all about collaboration and community: building a vision with the writers, editors, art directors, and subjects. When it comes to photographing interiors, the collaboration includes homeowners, architects, and designers who bring spaces to life. **MARC FOWLER,** *Metropolis Studio*

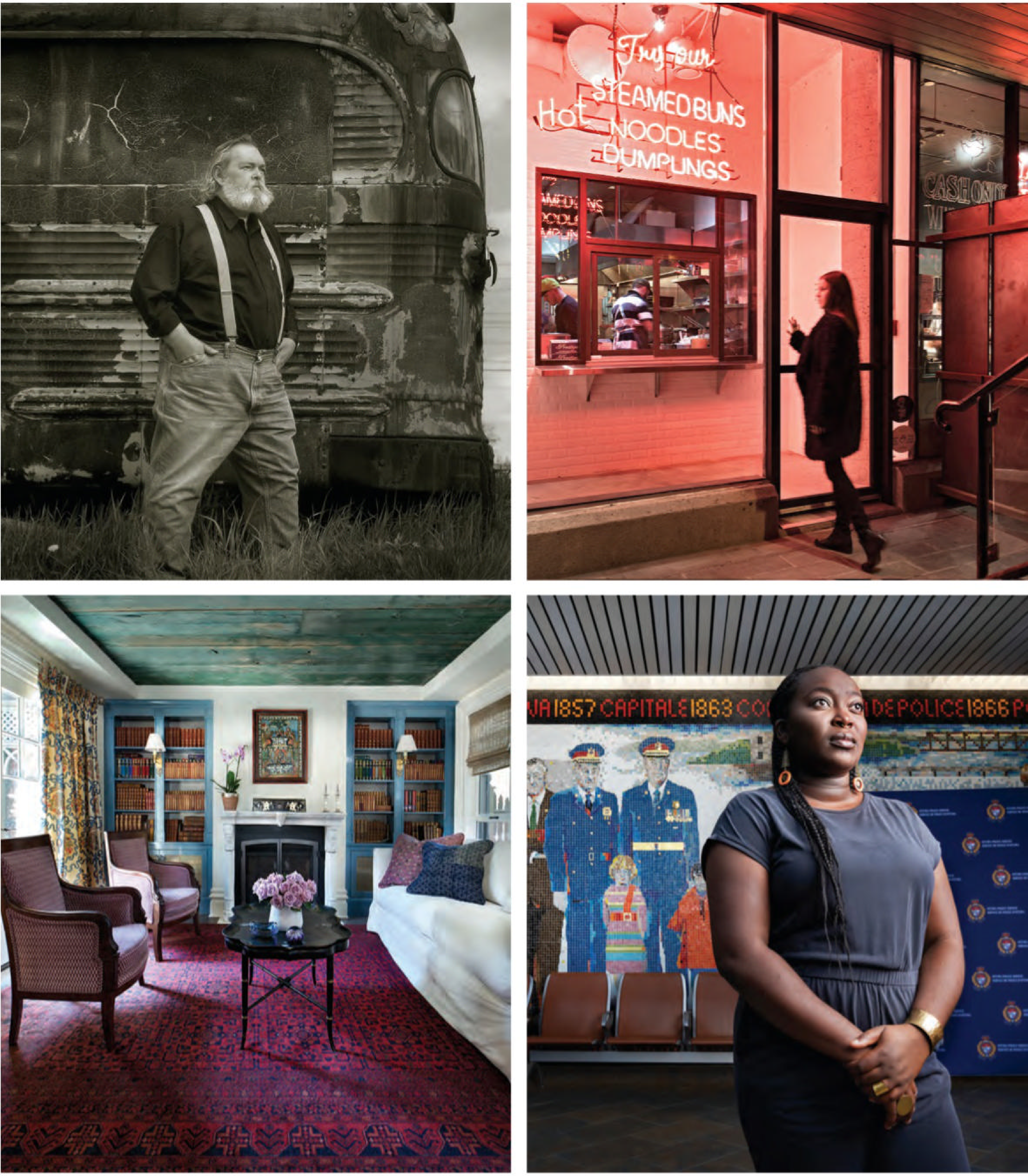
A city magazine is premised on its "mix" — a compelling combination of features, short stories, profiles, and culture. It is a place to opine, reflect, document, and shape an identity. I loved that we had a thorough fact-checking process and enjoyed researching and writing long-form pieces. My first was in the late '90s on the drag scene at Icon nightclub (led by Bella Strait, who gave Bette Midler a run for her money) and crafted under the editorship of Rosa Harris-Adler. I later joined the editorial staff filling in on a mat leave for Sarah Brown, took my own mat leaves while Dayanti Karunaratne came in, and had the pleasure to work with all of these top-notch editors, superb writers, graphic designers, and publishers over the years. I will certainly remember the profile on the making of *Punched* by local filmmaker Craig Conoley. It was eye-opening to follow his personal story of healing and creation. Greg and Holly Harris shared intimate details on making their open marriage work.

In the early days, the magazine offices were located in an old house on Argyle Street with sloping floors that made desk chairs with wheels impractical. I loved the expansive walls where we could see our double-page spreads, plan the issues, and collaborate.

Working in publishing is about saying goodbye: to sections, to budgets, to colleagues on furlough, to hefty page counts — as was the case in my previous roles at alt-weeklies. There comes a time to turn the page and I am very glad for the rewarding friendships that came out of this time. You get an interesting, engaged, curious, crew of people working in these fields and by their very natures, they go on to do other other interesting and engaging things.

Fateema Sayani,
Senior editor, 2004-2009

> **"I loved the expansive walls where we could see our double-page spreads, plan the issues, and collaborate"** FATEEMA SAYANI, SENIOR EDITOR, 2004-2009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Clockwise from top left, CHEZ 106 host and folk music enthusiast Allan "Chopper" McKinnon photographed in a field near the VIA train station in 2001; Elgin Street eatery Datsun, shot in 2016, shows the energy of the local restaurant scene; for a series of portraits on people affected by the February 2022 protests, Debbie Owusu-Akyeeah was photographed in front of a mural at the Ottawa Police Service headquarters; this striking interior image graced the cover of our 2016 Interiors edition.

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I'm ignoring my editor's instructions to pick just one highlight among the many assignments I've been privileged to cover for *Ottawa Magazine*. It's simply impossible. However, I can certainly say that it's been a constant source of joy to write about food, design, books, and interesting people for the best magazine in Ottawa. I've been lucky enough to get private guided tours of some of the most polished and beautiful houses in the region and to work on the annual Best Restaurants issue for several years, bearing witness to the continued growth, quality, and sophistication of the restaurant industry. I've been fortunate to enjoy the food of two fine female chefs whose talent made me want to shout from the rooftops. The first is Brianna Kim, chef-owner of Alice and 2023 Winner of the Canadian Culinary Championships. The second, Dominique Dufour, opening chef at Norca in Le Germain Hotel, subsequently the chef-owner of Gray Jay, which recently closed.

Hattie Klotz,
Freelance writer, 2000 - 2023

What began as an idea became a minor obsession. I pitched *Shacking Up* in 2008 as a visit to the ice fishing shanties that spring up annually on the Ottawa River at Petrie Island in Orléans. What I discovered when I got there — a mini-village of welcoming people more intent on socializing than fishing, rosy-cheeked kids playing hockey on the most natural ice surface imaginable, shacks decked out in Christmas lights with barbeques outside and bubbling beans on portable stoves as well as TVs, couches and even beds inside — was so seductive that I returned time and again in both good weather and foul. The happy memory of those visits flooded back during the isolation of the pandemic, but I now fear climate change may permanently savage this convivial pop-up community.

Patrick Langston,
Freelance writer, 2006 - 2023

> **"It was truly energizing to capture the Ottawa we knew — one that was cool, chic, and so very creative"**
>
> SARAH BROWN, SENIOR EDITOR (1998 - 2005), EDITOR (2006 - 2013)

***Ottawa Magazine*'s Best Restaurants** event that began in 2017 was always such a joyful expression of the connection the magazine had with the city. There's a detachment of sorts putting out a magazine for readers who you rarely see in person, and then you get hundreds of them in the same room all at the same time, eating food from the best restaurants in the city. It was always the best night of the year.

When we brought the event back last year for the first time since the pandemic, the joy and excitement was palpable. It was also the venue for my absolute favourite moment at the magazine. Towards the end of the event, at the Horticulture Building at Lansdowne, all the chefs and restaurant staff there for the event insisted on gathering for a group photo. These people, whose businesses had been disrupted so dramatically by the pandemic, wanted a lasting memory of the joy they felt. It was a fitting symbol for what *Ottawa Magazine* always did: Create a shared experience that inspired people to get more from their city.

Duncan Clark,
Publisher, 2019 - 2022

When I'm asked what story has impacted me the most, I point to the trial of Donna Jones, a vibrant woman who endured years of abuse before being murdered by her husband. For *Ottawa Magazine*, I wrote about the group of friends who consoled each other in court as each horrific detail was revealed. They were bright, beautiful career women beset by guilt that they were unable to help Jones free herself from the monster controlling her life. Justice prevailed but didn't heal their wounds. But as the women walked away from court, arm-in-arm, it was obvious their collective pain only strengthened their bond of friendship.

Judy Trinh,
Freelance writer, 2005 - 2022

One of my proudest memories is a number. 210. The year was 2007 and *Ottawa Magazine*'s annual Interiors edition topped 200 pages for the first time. It was a 210-page brick! It felt like the Ottawa equivalent of Vogue's famous September issue — so many ads that we included a four-page ad index in the back. There was a thrill to documenting gorgeous projects by local architects and designers, touring exquisite gardens, and even photographing a series of diplomatic residences. It was truly energizing to capture the Ottawa we knew — one that was cool, chic, and so very creative. And the launch party was such an event! The wine flowed, the conversation sparkled, and the mingling went on well into the night. I feel so lucky that our magazine team had the opportunity to celebrate this aspect of our city for so many years.

Sarah Brown,
Senior editor (1998 - 2005),
Editor (2006 - 2013)

■ Not sure if it was my dad jokes or East Coast ways that made an impression on her but Jane Corbett at *Ottawa Magazine* was kind enough to give me my first paid gig over 15 years ago. Since then, I've been lucky to be assigned numerous features and will always be grateful for the confidence and trust the magazine has shown me. During the cannabis hype a few years ago, I had the idea to photograph a pot-inspired cocktail. Bartender Shane Gifford at Jabberwocky Super Club understood my vision and helped make the idea come to life. Along with my assistant Maryn Devine, we produced these images that were not only featured in the magazine but also went on to win an Applied Arts Photography Award. **RÉMI THÉRIAULT,** *House of Common Studio*

I was there when it started and, as fortune would have it, am here as it ends. My work with the company started 35 years ago, before this small publishing company called Capital Publishers even launched *Ottawa Magazine*. I still remember the buzz of the magazine's inception back in the Cumberland offices in 1998. There was much excitement around hiring a veteran editor and having an actual budget to hire writers, photographers, and illustrators.

The office was made up of 20 or more people at the time. I had a great post to watch the excitement of putting together each issue, working mostly on the ad artwork and the very occasional layout. Jane Corbett, the founding art director and I, had a loving, combative relationship that could only be replicated by siblings or old couples and so I felt free to offer my opinions, wanted or not, about her directions. It was an exciting and daunting experience to take over those reins as art director five years ago, but I loved the challenges and marvelled at the work done by the many photographers and illustrators. I feel so grateful to have had one of the most creative jobs I could have ever hoped for. What other job produces an actual printed record of the work and art accomplished?

Jeff Eustace,
Art director, 2017-2023

■ When news came about the end of *Ottawa Magazine*, sadness and disbelief set in. Having collaborated for over 20 years photographing food, featuring people and architectural locations, the end of this publication forced me to look back at so many amazing projects I've done. One of my favourites has to be the mermaid cover we did for the Love Of Water issue. It began at 5:30 a.m. at Le Nordik when our model put on her 85-pound mermaid tail and jumped in the water. We photographed her swimming in the infinity pool as the sun started to rise… this felt like an amazing moment. It remains my most memorable cover feature the magazine gave me. The variety of work, and the trust that was put in me from the publication and art directors was always appreciated, and will be missed. This is a great loss to our amazing city. **CHRISTIAN LALONDE,** *Photolux Studio*

The front cover is the most important page of a magazine. Its job is to invite the reader to pick it up. During its 25-year life span *Ottawa Magazine* created over 200 covers. The annual Interiors issue was the easiest to do as we could choose from beautiful photography of stunning Ottawa homes. The Best Restaurants and other food issues were a snap as well, thanks to the brilliant food photographer Chris Lalonde. The annual real estate issues were the most challenging. It was not easy to find ways to visualize concepts like densification or neighborhood enclaves. I loved illustrated covers but they were the most risky. How the illustrator might realize the editor and art director's cover concept could prove surprising. Fortunately, the talented Alan King found ways to capture "the NCC's crown prince" Marcel Beaudry in the inaugural April 1998 issue and of Russell Mills, former *Ottawa Citizen* publisher as a "free press superhero" in our August 2002 issue.

Photography of people is most often the strongest approach for a city magazine cover. Former art director Jane Corbett had always dreamed of a mermaid cover and she realized her dream by photographing a mermaid swimming instructor (it was a thing, briefly) in the infinity pool at Le Nordik. Marlen Cowpland graced our most controversial cover (an issue that questioned why exactly she caused so much controversy in our government town) and the cover of Daniel Alfredsson proved to be our best selling cover. (Alfie! Alfie! Alfie!) Our 10th anniversary issue featured a special fold-out cover with National Arts Centre Orchestra's principal cello Amanda Forsyth holding a copy of an earlier issue she appeared in, six years earlier.

Over 200 covers. Over 200 cover stories. That was a time.

Dianne Wing,
Publisher, 2000 - 2019

> "What other job produces an actual printed record of the work and art accomplished?"
>
> JEFF EUSTACE, ART DIRECTOR (2017-2023)

The theme was themes. For much of my time with *Ottawa Magazine*, there were simply so many stories, and such a rich well of writers and photographers, that we found that picking a theme for some issues would help guide our cutting-room floor decisions. And so I found myself assigning a sex-themed series for one of my first issues as editor. I'm not sure what gave me the courage to ask Elliott Strikefoot, who I knew as a photographer called Sarai, if they would talk to me about the name change and this word we were starting to hear: transgender. They were in the midst of a journey, and over months of lunches and coffees I was allowed to be a part of it, and held responsible for conveying that personal story to our readers.

Then there were the outliers. The stories that didn't fit in a certain section or within a theme, but nevertheless begged to be told. *Portrait of a Pow Wow* was such a piece. It began when editor Matt Harrison asked, "I wonder what summer on a reservation is like?" Soon I was connecting with Anishinaabe resident Shady Hafez and photographer David Trattles; we didn't think too much about the details, but we built trust and eventually I found myself, on a hot summer day at Kitigan Zibi, enjoying the great spectacle of the Pow Wow: the warm smiles and blossoming culture quite different than what we see in Ottawa, and very much alive.

Dayanti Karunaratne,
Senior editor (2019 - 2012),
Editor (2013 - 2022)

Bringing hope to the city

A new jewellery collaboration between Howard Fine Jewellers, True Bijoux and Cornerstone Housing for Women raises money for Ottawa's vulnerable

Created for Howard Fine Jewellers and True Bijoux

Stephanie and Lindsay Appotive, also known as The Jewellery Sisters, are honoured to announce their collaboration with Boutique Cornerstone to support Cornerstone Housing for Women.

As owners of Howard Fine Jewellers and True Bijoux, we are excited to join hands with Boutique Cornerstone to raise funds for such a worthy cause through the *A Pearl of Hope* Bracelet Fundraiser. It is with sincere gratitude and a deep sense of humility that we embark on this meaningful endeavour to make a positive impact in the lives of women in need.

As local female entrepreneurs born and raised in Ottawa we recognize the growing demand that Cornerstone is facing to meet the needs of supportive housing and services for the more than 200 women and gender diverse people they serve everyday. Collaborating with Cornerstone allows us to connect with our community to support the healing and recovery of women. As women and sisters we connect deeply with the Cornerstone values that all women deserve the chance to heal in peace and live with dignity.

This spring, our stores Howard and True Bijoux, in collaboration with Boutique Cornerstone, are launching a limited edition collection of single pearl bracelets. The bracelet called *A Pearl of Hope*, will see 100 percent of the proceeds donated to Cornerstone. Our collective mission is to sell 1,000 bracelets, each one symbolizing a stark reality: 1,000 women left destitute, homeless and vulnerable on the streets of Ottawa every year.

Our belief that if we work together, we can help to make meaningful local change.

As custom jewellery designers each project we collaborate on starts with listening in order to gain a deeper understanding of the design goals. We are passionate about jewellery collaborations, and working everyday in our businesses makes this second nature for both of us.

For the *A Pearl of Hope* bracelet our team comprised of master goldsmiths and gemologists had the good fortune of working with the team from Boutique Cornerstone, Andrea Laurin, Katie Faught and Anna Rumin who wanted to design a recognizable and distinct bracelet at an accessible price range for as many community members as possible.

"I met Stephanie and told her about Boutique Cornerstone, and how it exists because of the generosity of women in the community who donate their fashion-forward and designer gently used clothing and accessories," Anna says.

She explained volunteers operate the store and its online presence, Thyme&Again donates space for the pop-up store, and Encore Fashion takes care of anything that isn't sold and donates the profits back to Cornerstone. "It's an amazing circle of women supporting women," Anna says. "I woke up the next morning, literally eight hours later, to an email from Stephanie and Lindsay proposing *A Pearl of Hope* — the circle just keeps getting bigger!"

The bracelet is unisex in design, fits all wrist sizes, and the different elements of the design each have meaning. The purple represents hope and is the signature colour of Cornerstone. The pearl represents power and femininity. In nature, the pearl takes years to form, the result of a response from the oyster to protect itself from an unexpected element by coating it. Over many years the result is a pearl.

"We connected with the idea that with time and the right resources a treasure can be born. It is a reminder that with time and resources supporting women and their needs can result in renewed hope and opportunity."

The pearl is hugged by two sterling silver beads, as silver is believed to be a mirror to the soul, helping to see ourselves as others see us. Heart and thought was given to the bracelet to further connect the wearer with the community it helps support.

We hope you will join us in helping to support Cornerstone with a purchase of the *A Pearl of Hope* bracelet at its launch on May 5 and 6 at Thyme&Again on Wellington, the site for Boutique Cornerstone's third pop-up of gently used, fashion-forward clothing and accessories, where 100 percent of proceeds go to Cornerstone Housing for Women. We hope that you wear it proudly and like us, believe that together we can help to make a difference.

A Pearl of Hope bracelets will also be available for purchase for $25 including tax online at www.Howard.ca, truebijoux.ca as well as in-store at Howard Jewellers and True Bijoux.

Photo by Jonathan Hobin

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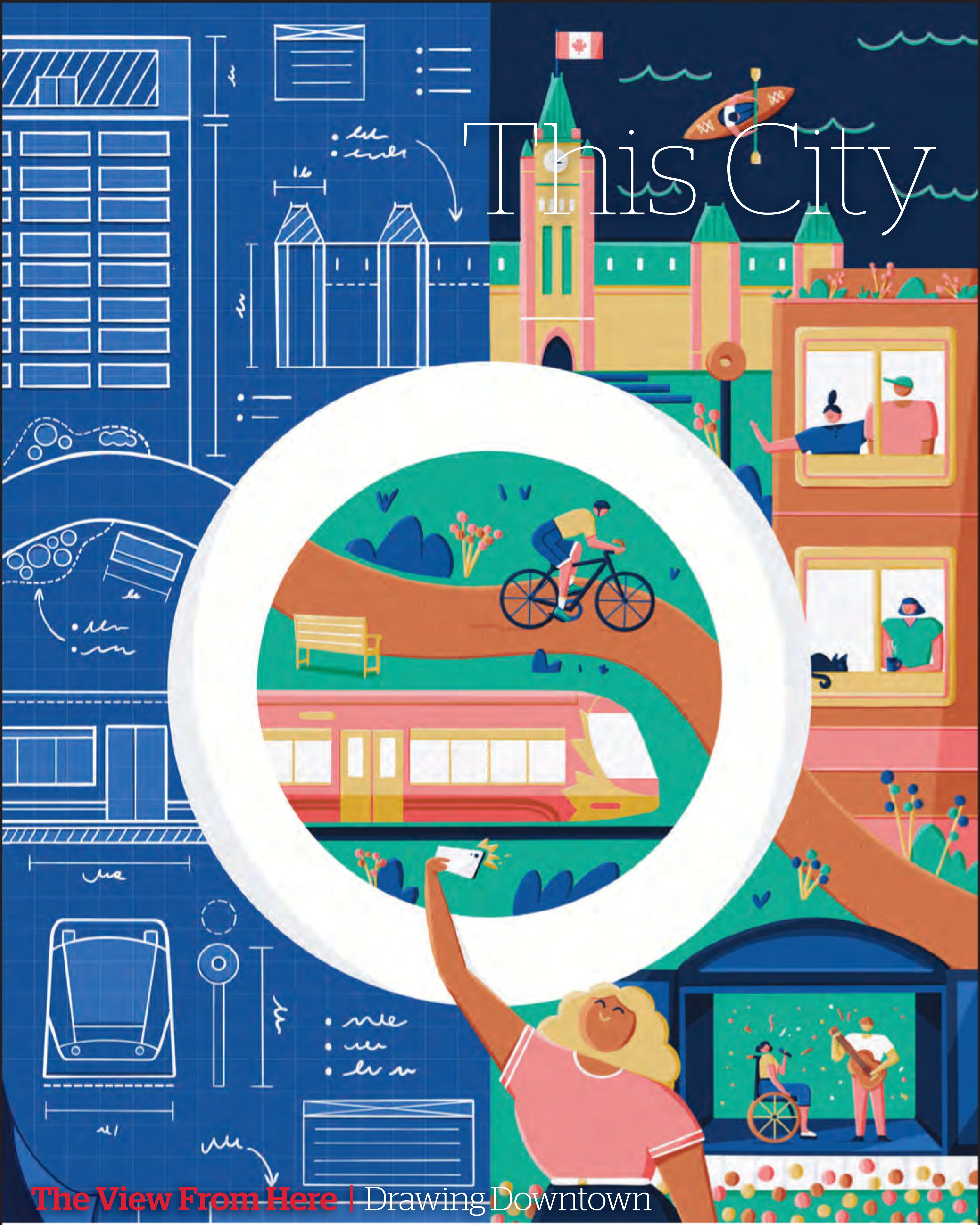


The View From Here | Drawing Downtown

ILLUSTRATION BY KIRSTIN SMITH

EVERY YEAR, *OTTAWA MAGAZINE* SHOWCASES the work of student illustrators at Algonquin College. The magazine's art director, Jeff Eustace, collaborates with instructor Fred Sebastian of the School of Media and Design to develop a guiding concept for the collaboration. This year, they settled on "The future of downtown."

Illustrator Kristin Smith wanted to use the magazine's vibe, "curious, thoughtful, lively and with a sense of humour," as she put it, as a way to peer into the future. So Smith included as much of downtown life as she could — the people, the places, and even the pets — while keeping it unmistakably Ottawa. — *Robert Hiltz*

Q & A | Hugh Fraser

He's not only a former Olympic sprinter who went on to become a judge and advise on anti-doping strategies, he is also a father who watched his two sons play hockey at high levels. **Adrian Harewood** talks to the new head of Hockey Canada about what the sport needs now

Why did your family leave Kingston, Jamaica, for Kingston, Ontario?
In those days, people with post-secondary aspirations went to Canada, U.S., or England. My father applied to Canada and was accepted at a couple of schools. And one of them was a school in Kingston, Ontario, called Queen's. Maybe it was a sign. I spent my first seven years living with my brother and my paternal grandmother in Jamaica and then my brother and I moved up when my father was completing his second degree, which was in law.

What lessons did your parents teach you?
One of the things they always stressed is that they brought us to Canada because of the opportunities that were here, so hard work was an important value. Getting the best education that you could, and not wasting opportunities. It was interesting, because even though we were very much a minority in the community, the message to myself and my siblings was always that there shouldn't be any opportunity that you should think of as being closed off to you.

You moved to Ottawa when you were 11. What are your memories of this time?
The Rough Riders became a big part of my life. I'd already been introduced to football and my dad had gone to Queen's with Ronnie Stewart who was, by then, a big Rough Rider legend.

What role did athletics play for you?
I was a high energy kid, so sports became a great outlet for me. I loved playing all different sports.

Did you play hockey?
I wanted to play hockey. A friend across the street, his father did the typical Canadian thing and flooded the backyard in the winter. But we didn't have any skates. So we bugged our parents and the following Christmas I got a pair. The next quest was to play organized hockey, but that wasn't in the cards. My folks didn't even have a car at the time. It just wasn't something they felt they could manage.

When did you get serious about running?
By twelfth grade I was getting into provincial championships and setting high school records. One day, I came home from an Ottawa track meet and my mother told me that [former Olympic sprinter] Harry Jerome had called me. He had seen me run, and told me I had great potential. "You're gonna compete for Canada one day," he said to me. It was the first time I really had any sense that running could take me somewhere.

You went on to compete in the 1976 Olympics. What was that like?
I was happy. I was able to rehabilitate my injured leg, compete in two events, and soak up that entire Olympic experience.

How would you describe yourself as an athlete?
Like everyone else, I enjoyed winning. I was very competitive. But I just never felt that athletic success should be the thing that defined me. Sport is wonderful, but I have a high interest in academics as well. I always wanted to balance the two.

Track has been plagued by doping. Did you know about it at the time?
Yeah, I have to say that I did. There were some events where you could pretty much tell just by walking by an athlete. I knew, but I decided early on that I would never go that route. I wanted to see how far I could go on my own abilities.

You spoke as an expert at the Dubin inquiry, after Ben Johnson lost his gold medal. Why did you join the inquiry?
I was quite surprised when I was invited to join the panel of experts. I realized I would be hearing testimony from former teammates and friends, but I thought it was a great opportunity to help clean up the sport. That was the main motivation. And once we got through that pain there was a lot of gain on the other side of it.

Shortly after that you became a judge. What did you enjoy about this work?
I loved the interaction with people. You do it for decades and yet there are no two days that are ever the same. You are never quite sure what's going to happen in that courtroom.

Did you see anything troubling when your sons were playing competitive hockey?
As the boys got older, that's when we had the first encounters with the racial comments. One of my boys was called the N-word on the ice. In another case, we were playing at a particular rink and they started making monkey gestures, or saying "Go back to Africa!" That was rare, but it happened. And we've heard talk about abhorrent things happening.

How did you tell your boys to respond if ever epithets were being thrown at them?
You don't want them to get into fights. You advise the coach about those things. If you are ever in a situation where you feel uncomfortable, let me know and we'll deal with it.

Hockey Canada is facing backlash after it brokered a settlement with the young woman in London, Ontario, following an incident with the members of the Canadian junior men's team. What did Hockey Canada do wrong?
That was obviously a decision done by a previous board. We don't actually know the particulars. Without having all of that information I would be in the position of the armchair quarterback trying to assess it.

Is hockey culture broken?
There is an aspect of hockey culture that definitely needs to be fixed. I think there's a consensus that all things are not right and change is needed.

Why did you take the position with Hockey Canada?
Sport has been very important to me and my family. I probably could have stayed on the sidelines and had my own criticisms. But I came to the view that if you're in a position to do something, or to effect change, it's better to answer the call.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY MARC FOWLER / METROPOLIS STUDIO

Found | The last matchsticks of Old Hull

Built as working-class homes in the wake of a great fire, **Laurent R-Cardinal** explores the fraught balance between saving the history of these turn-of-the-century homes and the needs of a growing metropolis

PRESSURE IS MOUNTING IN OLD HULL. As an effect of gentrification, many iconic so-called matchstick houses are getting knocked down to make way for denser residential buildings. While the streets of Vieux-Hull are still for the most part lined with these distinctive *maison dite allumettes*, certain areas are now — or will soon be — devoid of this history.

With their proximity to Ottawa's downtown core, these lots in Hull appeal to developers. Some recent projects were built close to interprovincial bridges, such as Heafey's VIU projects or Boulet's Le Vibe buildings.

The matchstick houses still standing today were built primarily at the turn of the 20th century to accommodate large working-class families, says Michelle Guitard, a historian who authored a book on Hull residential architecture. Many of these houses were erected to replace those destroyed in fires, namely the Great Hull Fire of 1900. That incident reduced to ashes more than 1,300 buildings — about 40 percent of Hull's territory.

Urgent to rebuild, almost everyone had the same reflex. "In those days, residents and builders followed a catalogue that had a step-by-step building guide," says Guitard, "which is why many of the houses in Old Hull are alike. With the number of mills nearby it was easy for residents to acquire lumber. The design was rather innovative for the time."

Built of square timber, matchstick houses have a balloned frame and are narrower than the common Ottawa suburban house. Typically, the facade has three sash windows (two above, one below) and a door in symmetry, and a peaked roof.

Since their construction more than a century ago, many of the homes were transformed and subdivided. Some were neglected for decades. Many were left unoccupied, eventually providing an argument for demolition.

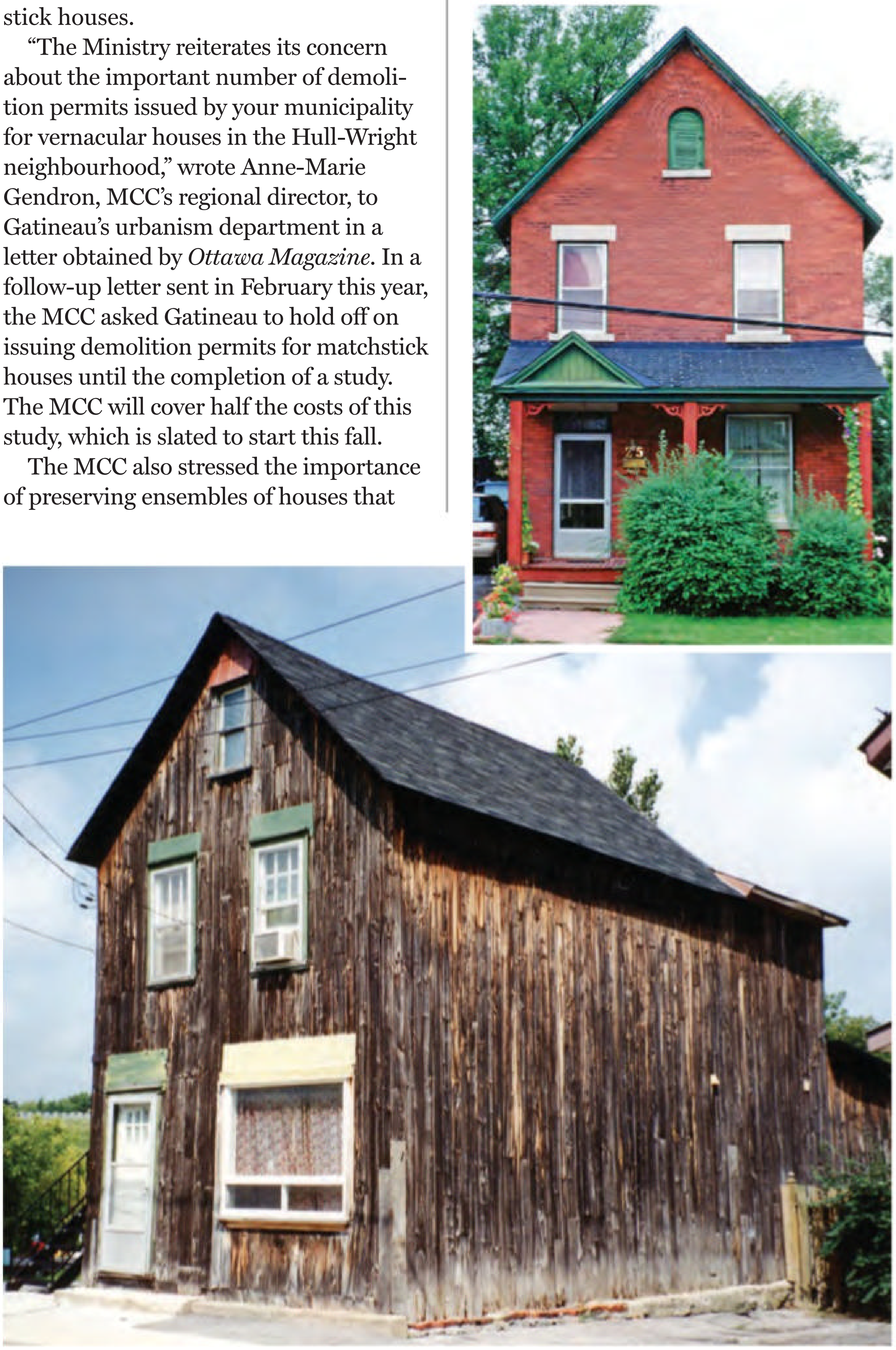
Local firms, as well as some from Montréal, are busy buying properties with the intention of building large-scale residential developments with hundreds of new units.

The rate at which the City of Gatineau has issued demolition permits for matchstick homes has raised some eyebrows. The provincial Ministry of Culture and Communications (MCC), which is responsible for heritage buildings, has sent the municipality at least two warning letters.

Municipalities must inform the MCC when issuing permits to demolish houses of a certain historic value that were built prior to 1940. Between spring 2021 and winter 2022, the MCC received more than 22 demolition notices for matchstick houses.

"The Ministry reiterates its concern about the important number of demolition permits issued by your municipality for vernacular houses in the Hull-Wright neighbourhood," wrote Anne-Marie Gendron, MCC's regional director, to Gatineau's urbanism department in a letter obtained by *Ottawa Magazine*. In a follow-up letter sent in February this year, the MCC asked Gatineau to hold off on issuing demolition permits for matchstick houses until the completion of a study. The MCC will cover half the costs of this study, which is slated to start this fall.

The MCC also stressed the importance of preserving ensembles of houses that can be seen as important sites of the urban fabric, as well as the industrial past of the former city of Hull. Michelle Guitard agrees with the MCC. "I know we can't save them all, but we need to celebrate them, as they are unique."



Two examples of the homes captured in 1993. The houses were built from a common design that made them easy to construct in the early 20th century

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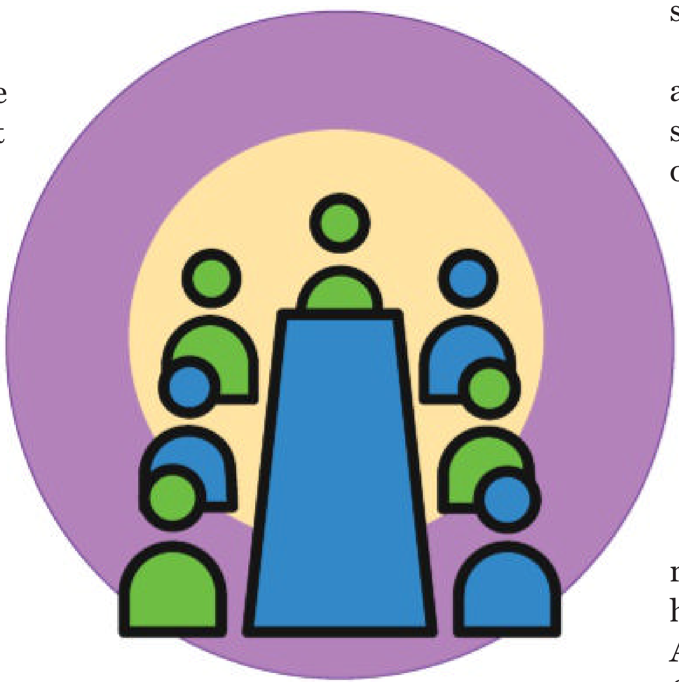
Opinion | Counselling change

It's been 20 years, but the effects of amalgamation are still being felt. **Drew-Anne Glennie** argues community councils could reconnect us with city hall and our neighbours



SOME PEOPLE SAY THAT LIVING in Ottawa feels like living in a small town, which sounds strange for a city of more than one million people. But among Canada's eight most populous cities, Ottawa covers the largest area. It's a factor that brings a huge diversity of interests to the populace, particularly between the urban core and outer suburbs. Yet, unlike Toronto or even less-than-half-our-size Halifax, there are no community councils to liase between neighbourhood interests and city hall: every Ottawan is under one decision-making body.

Why is this a problem? In the recent mayoral election, there was a stark regional split: Mark Sutcliffe won handily in wards outside the Greenbelt; Catherine McKenney dominated only the inner core.

To understand the situation, it's important to look at the city's origins. Before we called it the City of Ottawa, the area was known as the Regional Municipality of Ottawa–Carleton (RMOC) from 1969 to 2000. The RMOC delivered the majority of municipal services and had a directly elected regional chair and 18 regional ward councillors. Each of the 11 constituent municipalities had their own mayor and a handful of councillors.

On Jan. 1, 2001 the city was amalgamated because the previous system had, in the words of one provincial advisor, "become ineffective, inefficient, and too expensive."

Fast-forward two decades and the recent election results can be seen as a direct effect of amalgamation. Earl Washburn of Ekos Research noted that primarily urban areas were concerned with affordable housing, public transit and bike lanes. In the suburbs, the concerns were better road connections, housing developments, and lower or status-quo property taxes.

Sutcliffe and McKenney's respective plans starkly exhibited this divide. The millions of dollars McKenney proposed for cycling became a critical wedge issue.

The architects of Ottawa's amalgamation were against creating community councils, citing fears that they would re-introduce two-tier governance, according to Zachary Spicer, a professor of public administration at York University. This is unlike many other major cities, which have systems for residents to engage on behalf of their neighbourhood in a formal way.

For instance, Montreal is divided into 19 boroughs, which operate similarly to RMOC-era municipalities. Issues arise, however, because borough governments can be inconsistent: each one has significant discretion over service levels. Likewise, borough politicians' desire to strengthen territorial power can contribute to tensions with the broader city's administration.

In Ontario, Toronto has community councils intended to make decisions on issues within their boundaries. They generally focus on local planning issues and land use, but are not entirely effective.

"They triage hyperlocal issues … but ultimately everything has to go back through the main council in order to be approved," Western University political science professor Zack Taylor explained. "I wouldn't say that they really do a lot to make government more local and accessible to ordinary people."

An alluring example can be found in Vancouver. There, explains University of Winnipeg's Aaron Moore, Metro Vancouver is made up of four boards of municipal appointees to oversee regional planning and entities providing services across the constituent region. It is a bottom-up approach, with municipalities providing Metro Vancouver with funding — and they're able to opt in or out of the services it provides.

Taylor said British Columbians generally don't view regional districts as a separate tier, but instead an extension of individual municipalities. "They see them as a way that local governments can work together, mostly voluntarily, in order to pursue collective projects."

In Ottawa, the urban-suburban divide manifested in the "Watson Club." In Jim Watson's final term as mayor, only non-urban councillors were appointed to chair committees.

However, these divisions are not a rule: in fact, Sutcliffe explicitly branded his campaign as being "for all of Ottawa." At the beginning of this term, urban Coun. Shawn Menard told CBC, "We're going to be a better-balanced council than in the past."

But even with this positive sign, there is still a reason to consider community decision-making bodies.

"The challenge with implementing community councils is finding the right balance of authority between city council and community councils," wrote Spicer and his colleague Alexandra Flynn in a 2017 paper.

This is where Metro Vancouver can offer guidance: the beauty of that system is that constituent municipalities give it an inch while keeping the mile. Why can't the reverse also work, with power over local matters provided — and funded — by the central council?

This concept actually goes perfectly with Spicer and Flynn's recommendations for reform of Toronto's community council system. In it, the city council would set goals and give community councils the discretion to implement them. Residents would be allowed a greater role on the community councils, to weigh in on details of projects in their area.

"If the city were to adopt these recommendations, Toronto would be one of the first Canadian cities to strike an appropriate balance between the needs of the community and the authority of city council," they wrote.

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THE FUTURE OF DOWNTOWN

The way people move and work in the core is changing. We explore the possibilities by talking to industry leaders and engaged residents about how to build a great downtown

DOWNTOWN OTTAWA HAS ALWAYS BEEN A PUZZLE. The needs of the city's biggest employer don't always result in a thriving downtown. This quandary has only become more acute with the rise of work-from-home lifestyles. In a decade or two, things could look very different because our collective perspective has changed so much in the last few years. We set out to figure out how the convergence of many factors will shape the short-term future.

Housing is a key concern, but how viable is it to transform vacant office towers into bustling homes? It's not straightforward, but there are ways to make it work.

The core is home to more than just a few office towers full of public servants. It is a living, breathing community made home by thousands.

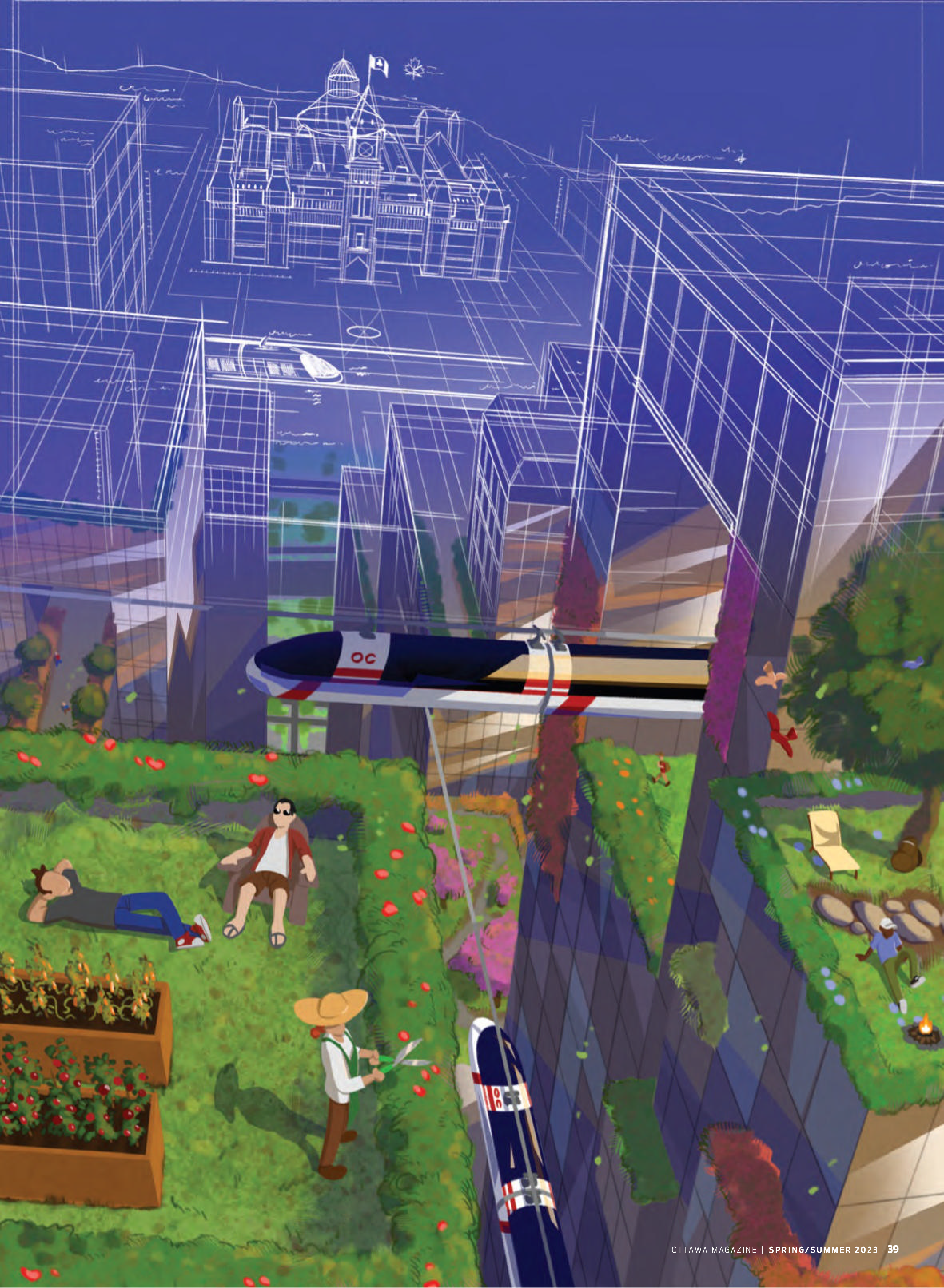
We speak with people who live in our area of interest — east of Bronson, north of the Queensway, west of the Rideau Canal — about what they love about living downtown and what improvements they'd like to see.

In pursuit of a vision, we look to another capital: Canberra, Australia. We learn how planners there have embraced the waterways and made downtown a destination of residents and tourists alike. We also take the temperature of the hotel industry, which was hit hard by the pandemic but is bouncing back with new projects.

But to start, is this The City that Fun Forgot? A filmmaker looks back at her work of the same name, made 10 years ago, to see what has changed. What could we do better? Read on to find out. — *Robert Hiltz*

WITH FILES FROM KATHLEEN BARR, MATT HARRISON, DAYANTI KARUNARATNE, HATTIE KLOTZ, AMEN JAFRI, AND NICKIE SHOBEIRY

ILLUSTRATION BY MATHIS COURNOYER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DISPELLING THE MYTH

Filmmaker **Amen Jafri** considers the moniker "the city that fun forgot"

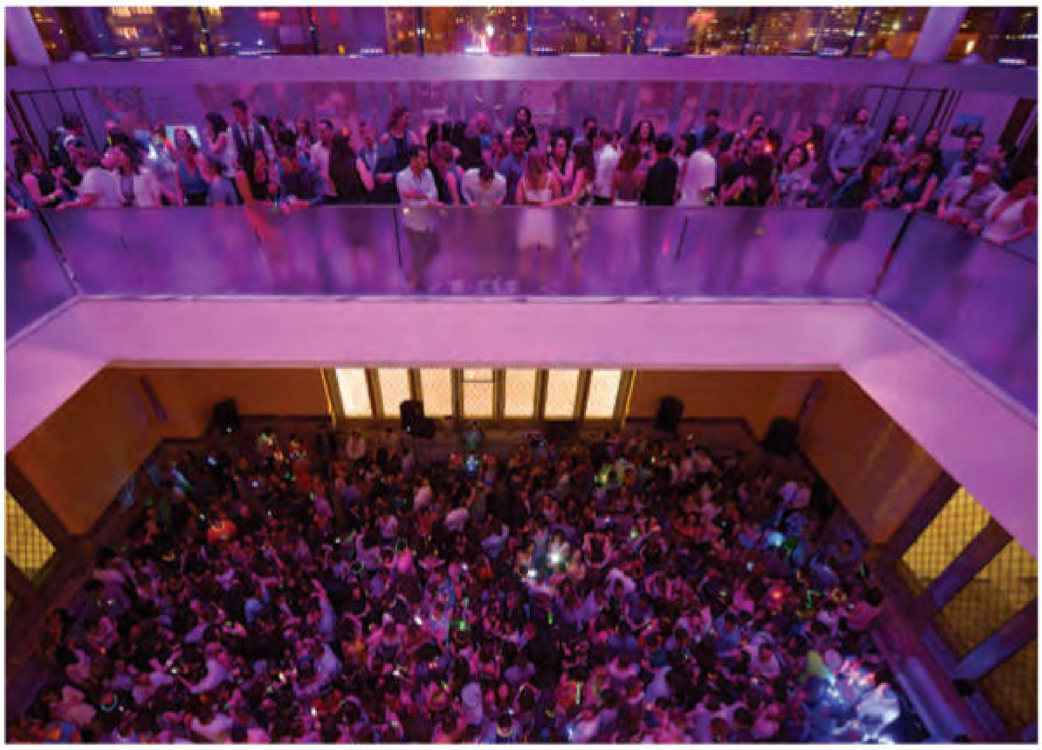


PHOTO COURTESY OF CANADIAN MUSEUM OF NATURE / MARTIN LIPMAN

The year was 2012 and I was fed up with Ottawa. A Toronto transplant, I'd followed a path worn by countless before me: After graduating from university I joined the public service and met my future spouse. I was tethered to the city, but unhappy about it. I struggled to feel engaged with anything interesting to do after work or on the weekends. I was doing what any good mid-aughts young millennial did: scouring community listings, Facebook, meetup.com and Kijiji. But either the events I attended were sparsely attended, or struck me as provincial in their ambition.

Occasionally there would be a gem, like Nuit Blanche: an event that ran for a few years starting in 2012, with eccentric street performances and interactive exhibits. Everyone knew Ottawa was a family town, so daytime fare like Winterlude catered mostly to young children, not twenty-somethings out on pub crawls. Even though I lived in the ByWard Market, which guaranteed a decent amount of nightlife, the city effectively died every winter.

Rather than continue to whine, I decided to make a 33-minute documentary about Ottawa's boring reputation. I knew I wasn't the only one frustrated. *The City That Fun Forgot?* ended up exploring three different themes: risk aversion; Ottawans as tenants, i.e. mostly transplants and therefore not fully identifying or connecting to it; and urban planning. The film concluded with solutions for revitalizing the city.

Ottawa has entrepreneurial creative enclaves. It has unique traits not found in Toronto or Montreal; with a change in attitude, these can fuel confidence and pride as Ottawans. Rewatching the film 10 years later, I'm reminded of that old adage, *plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose*. If we don't lean into what we do well, or learn from past mistakes, then the future of this city — particularly its downtown core — will continue to look the same. Or, worse, fall into decay.

There are things we do well. From Timekode to Nature Nocturne to the Digi60 Filmmakers' Festival and more, there's a thriving and playful community scene that has emerged this past decade. The quality of those events continues to grow, even if they were paused by the pandemic. Online, it's fairly easy to find out about upcoming events. And it was powerful to see Ottawans unite and rally to support each other, regardless of where in the city they lived, against the traumatic onslaught of convoy outsiders.

However, the city continues to lack ambition and vibrancy. Our business districts are increasingly filled with grey high rises and cannabis stores. Unless you know where to look, Ottawa can look like a ghost town after hours. Aside from skiing and skating, there's not much to do in the winters around here — it's hard to get around and no one wants to navigate those cold, windswept streets.

Speaking of getting around, one thing has put a damper on our ambitions to get out more: the LRT, a project that literally went off the rails. I was recently forced to buy a car after having a baby and moving out to the suburbs of Gatineau. I'm continually shocked at how much cheaper and more reliable it is to park downtown than depend on transit.

But let's not focus on the negative. If we think positively, then surely we can turn this city around. So as I humbly trod toward middle age and gaze into my crystal ball for Ottawa in 2033, here's what I foresee:

A world-class transit system, finally reducing our overreliance on cars. Our LRT is fully built out, no longer breaks down in the winter, and is free. (As it turned out, all we needed to fix our problems was to ask ChatGPT.) All-night raves on Sparks Street because urban density finally exists downtown. And as a happy consequence, a parallel after-6-p.m. underground economy, to replace any empty storefronts, like a contemporary speakeasy of sorts. In an unexpected twist, Ottawa embraces its boring reputation full throttle, branding it to the world, which in turn makes us cool. Influencers make viral listicles for TikTok on the top "normcore" activities in the nation's capital.

Sardonicism aside, I've always believed in Ottawa's potential. It reminds me of an awkward, gawky teenager, always pitted against its elder siblings Toronto and Montreal. Sure, the puberty strains have been tough this past decade. I'm hopeful we're ready to evolve into the mature, sophisticated city we're destined to become.

PHOTO BY DAVID KAWAI

VIEWS FROM THE CORE Donna Holtom

This small business owner knows that downtown comes alive through unique cafés, vibrant parks, and exciting events

Why do you live downtown?
Donna: My husband and I both have businesses based downtown and we have worked downtown for many years. When the children were young they attended Elgin Street School, Hopewell, and Lisgar; all were great schools.

What do you enjoy about the location?
I love the area because it is a diverse, walkable community in the heart of the city. The area is recognized as a heritage neighbourhood with many turn-of-the-century homes and buildings.

Also, it's close to many small businesses with owners on site who are very committed and engaged with their community. There are wonderful cafés, bakeries, restaurants, yoga studios, as well as unique retail stores. Art House Café, owned and run by Genevieve Betournay, is a great community hub, always abuzz with young artists and patrons. It hosts many live performances by local artists and its walls are filled with creative art. In the spring and summer months, the cafe hosts Music in Dundonald Park on Friday nights. Le Poisson Bleu Restaurant on Somerset is a great destination for seafood lovers. Dessert First, a new boutique bakery by Julia Gindra on Bay at Somerset, has become a neighbourhood favourite.

What would you like to see improved?
Parks in the area need to be upgraded and maintained. This area has very few green spaces. As the city continues to intensify there is a greater demand than ever for spaces where people can be outdoors, get active, and benefit from nature. With many young families moving to the area, there is a need for more investment in the infrastructure that would support healthy, sustainable lifestyles. This also means a reinvestment in community centres, schools, and parks to ensure young families have the amenities they need.

Also, many residential units are being converted to studio apartments, student accommodations, or small one- or two-bedroom apartments. Larger homes and living environments are required to sustain a vibrant mixed community.

What project(s) or issues are you paying attention to these days?
Community building and engagement. Whether through a group of volunteer gardeners at Dundonald Park or artistic groups such as Music and Beyond, Odyssey Showcase, or the Ottawa Library, bringing art to the outdoors is a perfect fit for this welcoming community.

HIGHRISE DISGUISE

As more people work from home, all eyes are on the high vacancy rate of commercial units in the core. Could empty cubicles be the answer to enlivening downtown? **Hattle Klotz** talks to industry leaders about the potential of adapting office towers into apartments

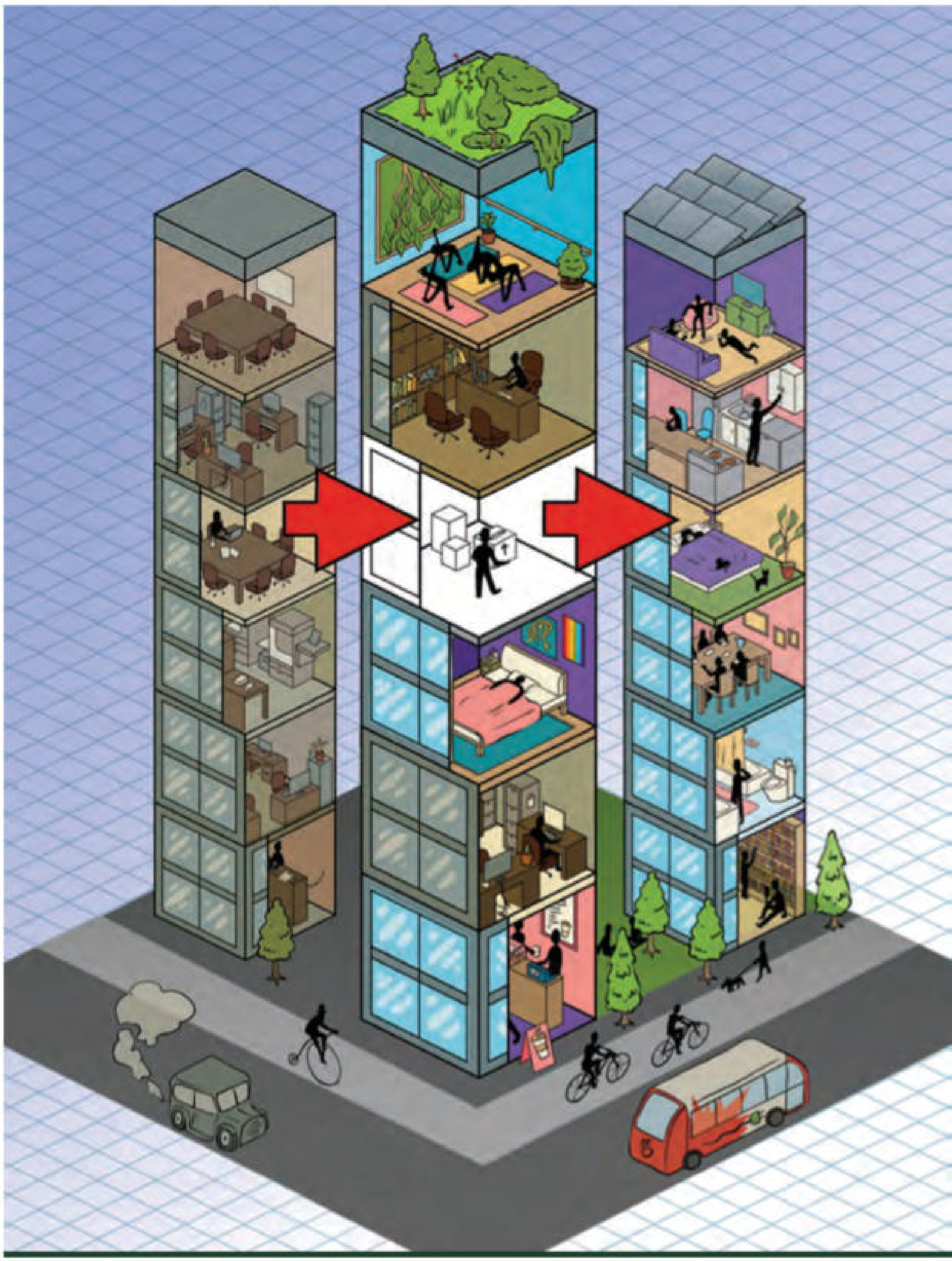


ILLUSTRATION BY LARYSSA WYSOCZANSKYJ

The post-Covid reality exacerbated an existing vacancy problem. Shopify, which formerly had 850 employees at its Elgin Street headquarters, went digital by default. Government employees have refused to return full-time to their offices. Plenty of other businesses and law firms have adopted flexible work strategies to keep their employees happy.

Combine this with a slew of commercial leases coming to an end and you have all the ingredients for a city without a heart. While it's all coming to a head now, this is a problem that's been plaguing Ottawa and many other North American cities for a while. Despite occasional attempts to animate Sparks Street and bring people to the area by offering light shows on the facade of the Parliament buildings, these do nothing to address the basic issue: healthy, vibrant neighborhoods combine offices, residential, and commercial spaces.

"Covid didn't cause this problem," says Andrew Reeves, architect and the owner of Linebox Studio. "It was always there. It's the result of years of bad planning. The ratio of offices to residential is way off. Covid gave us the opportunity to ask, what was wrong? What was right? What needs to be fixed? I hope we use this to keep momentum moving forward, to correct what was wrong in the first place."

Reeves has been working on a project for the adaptive reuse of a building on an unspectacular office block at 473 Albert St., which he describes as "a building that only an architect could love." Working with developer CLV Group, the team has created 130 units in a building now called the Slayte. It's packed with amenities such as a gym, salt-water hot tub, Zoom rooms, shared office space, yoga studio, rooftop terrace, and bike storage. "Our challenge was how to take a building from commercial to residential. It's a collision of style and technical needs. But we take complicated problems and see them as opportunity," says Reeves, whose firm has previously converted a large, deconsecrated church in Vanier to condos. They were also behind the renovation of an old bank building into the high-end eatery Riviera, and a former cinema to offices for Klipfolio.

Reeves would like to see more of these conversions. "Fixing one building won't solve the urban planning problem and to have a proper mix is a fine balance," he says. He envisions a series of "tiny towns," whereby buildings offer the opportunity for accidental collisions — people meeting people to and from work, at the gym, in their apartment building, or when popping out to get a snack or a drink. In other words, focusing on the places where humans naturally gather.

None of this will happen without all levels of government and the private sector getting involved — and it's going to be expensive.

These things require real commitment, says Reeves. More density requires bylaw changes, rezoning, and a reassessment of development charges.

Meanwhile, Calgary seems to be the Canadian city where adaptive reuse has a stronger foothold. Close to 200,000 square feet of office space in the Palliser One building is being converted into 176 apartments. Officially called the Downtown Calgary Development

Incentive Program, it's the most successful of its kind in the country, providing incentives to convert office buildings to residential. According to a November 2022 report published by the city, since 2018, over 665,000 square feet of office space has been converted into 700 homes. But then there's a greater imperative: the city has a 31 per cent vacancy rate.

By comparison, commercial real estate broker James McNeil estimates that there are only about 12 buildings suitable for adaptive residential reuse in the downtown core. Reeves agrees, noting that office buildings tend to have elevators and toilets clustered around a central well, as well as inflexible floor plans. McNeil notes that many of Ottawa's buildings are built right to the property line. "There's not a lot of airspace around our buildings," he says, "so how do we deal with 10-foot views on three sides? What are the buildings that have decent views and good light?"

Blame the Peace Tower. Due to regulations that limit the height of downtown buildings in the capital, to allow for unobstructed views of the Peace Tower, developers have typically chosen to maximize their investment not in height, but in density. And this makes converting office buildings to apartments all the more difficult.

McNeil also believes that it's only a very small part of the solution. Let's say that those 12 buildings suitable amount to 1.2 million square feet of space, which is about 1,400 units and would bring approximately 3,000 extra people to live in the downtown core. "Nice, but really not meaningful," he says.

What do we need to do to create that vibrancy downtown in light of the new way in which we work? "I am skeptical that this [conversion from offices to residential] is going to happen in a meaningful way," says McNeil. And given that there are presently 86 new buildings, which equates to 18,000 to 20,000 units currently under construction or planned, he believes that residents will choose new builds over an adaptation. But this could mean that affordable housing becomes more available in the downtown core. "Frankly, any development is good development in the residential sector at present, except for sprawl," he says.

In 2023, the projected vacancy rate in Ottawa is 14 per cent, which is high compared to the previous record of 12.2 per cent in 2015. "The challenge is we really don't know where we are still. We need to look at where we are in the lease cycles, but it's my theory that lease renewals are coming to roost now," says McNeil.

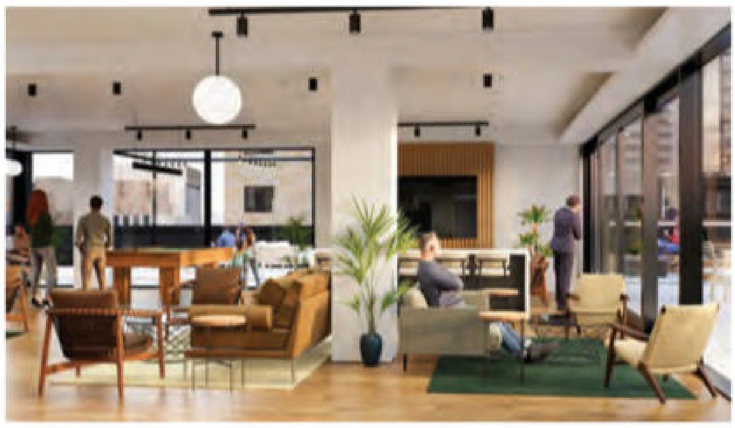
> "Fixing one building won't solve the urban planning problem. To have a proper mix is a fine balance"

Cornerstone Housing for Women is one organization that has taken the plunge into adaptive reuse. The organization recently made public its plans for 44 Eccles St., a former school built in 1934. More recently, it has been used as an office building. It's close to other Cornerstone facilities, "which helps to build the sense of community," says executive director Sarah Davis. The building will feature 46 single-occupant affordable units and a community room, kitchen, and laundry.

It's not a straightforward job. "Dealing with an existing building that has undergone many renovations is always a challenge," says Jessie Smith at CSV Architects. "Surprises in the walls and floors have created many small obstacles, however we continue to find solutions on a case-by-case basis and adapt the design as needed." Smith notes that the existing windows are quite large compared to what would typically be used in a residential setting. To maintain the heritage character, especially on the street-facing exterior, triple glazing is being used to compensate for the larger area. On the opposite side, smaller windows will offer privacy. It took careful planning to coordinate mechanical services with the existing floor joists and the layout of deep steel beams, which were ideal for those large classrooms. The building is slated to open in February 2024.

One thing is for sure: downtown Ottawa has an amazing opportunity right now. With the Sens probably coming back to the city core, the opening of the new library and the other development at LeBreton Flats, there's potential everywhere you look.

"But right now, I feel that Ottawa is off momentum. It's been tired for a long time," says Reeves. "I would not consider Ottawa a world-class capital city. We have to acknowledge that to change that. There's so much opportunity. We need to think really big — and that comes with real investment, a little bit of arrogance and bravado."



Top: A former office building on a side street in Chinatown was recently purchased by Cornerstone Housing for Women and will soon be home to 46 residential units
Bottom: A rendering of one of the common areas in the Slayte building on Slater

VIEWS FROM THE CORE Tom Evans and Heather Wilcox

After renting in Centretown for more than 20 years, this couple has a sharp sense on what the area needs now

Where do you live downtown?
Heather: We're renting in the Golden Triangle. We were renting for 20 years, until 2021, in West Centretown.
Tom: We live on Delaware now, between Cartier and the canal.

Why did you first move downtown?
Heather: Well, it was a deal. It was a semi-detached house, and it was really central so I could walk to work.
Tom: I previously owned a house in Carleton Place. When we moved to Ottawa, we both worked downtown and found that we really couldn't afford to buy a place. So we decided to rent. We've lived in a few places that were not central, but Heather knew somebody who lived downtown and told us about a half-duplex on James where the rent was pretty reasonable. The longer we stayed there, the more reasonable it became. So yeah, it was great for us — we didn't need a car.

It's kind of interesting how we ended up here on Delaware. We had lived quite a while on James Street and the landlord kept the rent low for a long time. I think it was kind of a tax write-off for him, but as a consequence he didn't do any of the work on the place — we did that. Heather built a nice garden and it's quite a nice home, but ultimately the house needed a lot of repairs that he wasn't prepared to do. We did what we could, but it sort of became unlivable.
Heather: And then this opportunity came up and I said, "Let's go for it."

"A lot of people are really struggling now and I notice more people living in tents. But where are people supposed to live?"

Tom: I do some work for Tippet-Richardson; I'm a moving consultant for them. So the landlady here wanted to move downstairs; this was her family home, and she was quite elderly. So she called on me to come and do the survey of her place and give her an estimate on moving.

She was actually one of the founding DJs of Chez 106 — Shelley Hartman. Sadly, she died less than a year ago. In any event, when she was still living here, I moved her down to the main floor of the house. As I was chatting with her, I looked around and thought the space she was in would suit Heather and I really well. We moved in after I moved her downstairs, and it's been about three years now. We kind of lucked out. I mean, it's very expensive, but we didn't have to do a lot of searching.

What do you like about the area?
Tom: I like the character of the neighbourhood. In Carleton Place, I lived in an old farmhouse that had become absorbed into the town. I prefer to live in a place that has character, and Centretown certainly provides that. It's frankly more interesting. We became a part of the community on James Street when we were there for so long.

What would you like to see improved?
Heather: Sidewalks! But on a larger scale, I do notice homelessness more on this side of Bank Street than I did on the other. And also the affordability of the neighbourhood: I really don't think we can continue to live here for the long term, and there are a lot of people in this same position.
Tom: I'll say that they do take slightly better care of the streets here in the winter time than they did on James Street. That area was abysmal and still is. I've got some friends on that street and it's ridiculous trying to get there sometimes.

When we were on James we were quite concerned about the development in the area and the standards that the city was setting for it as a residential neighbourhood. They were really neglecting the character of the neighborhood, allowing a lot of development. A lot of exemptions to standards that have been set in place. We saw a lot of requests for cash in lieu of parking and attempts to build structures that really didn't suit the neighborhood.

Also, there seemed to be a lot of back-scratching going on between members of the planning committee and the developers. We are disconnected from it now, but we joined a group of people called the Friends of James and Bay, who stood up in opposition to one particular young guy from a family that has a lot of money. We got to know everybody on the street and became pretty aware of all those issues. Now it's a brand new council, and I don't know whether or not they're going to clean house and change things.

If you could change one thing about your neighbourhood what would it be?
Heather: I have mobility issues and I have problems with the sidewalks in winter and in summer. They're not cleaned in winter very well and, particularly along the NCC property, there are sinkholes in the pathway. That's a concern. And I don't like the new design of the sidewalk the city has for driveways, with a 45-degree angle so that cars can have easier access to the road from their driveway. But if you're walking along that sidewalk, you have to work at a 45-degree angle. That really bothers me; the city did consult residents about this. But It didn't work. They didn't listen.

PHOTO BY DAVID KAWAI

What project(s) or issues are you paying attention to?

Heather: Homelessness. It's going to get worse before it gets better. A lot of people are really struggling now and I notice more people living in tents. But where are people supposed to live? Downtown used to be an affordable option for young people and students when they're first leaving home. Now that everybody wants to retire and move downtown, where are we supposed to live?

Tom: Rental units are almost non-existent thanks to Airbnb. There's just not much rental inventory and certainly none that's affordable.

I'm also concerned, in the macro sense, about what's happening with city politics. I mean, it's very obvious that the rural councillors are basically getting what they need on council. Mark Sutcliffe is a great guy, but it remains to be seen whether or not he'll be a mayor who's good for the city. It really depends upon what you want from the city — and where you live. That's a little bit distressing living down here because everybody loves to come downtown.

Heather: When you have someone over to visit from out of the city and you live in, say, Barrhaven, where do you take them? You bring them downtown. You bring them to the ByWard Market. You bring them to the Glebe. You walk along the Rideau Canal. There's a division between those voters and the real social needs downtown.

Tom: That dynamic is visible on the street here; you don't see it in Barrhaven. But when you live with it day-to-day, you wonder about the priorities of our city council. It doesn't affect us directly, but we see it and it really doesn't seem fair at this point. The downtown core is required to handle the burden too, of things like the trucker protest. My point is that living here in Centretown you see these things, and it's just incredibly frustrating that there's not more being done. Maybe this is a more collegial council, but I'm not too optimistic.

RISK
APOLKA

COMPARING TO CANBERRA

When trying to reimagine Ottawa, it's helpful to look at other capitals, specifically those that share some common features. In an effort to investigate our city's unique characteristics and challenges, **Matt Harrison** looks at Canberra, the capital city of Australia

Like Ottawa, which was created in the 1800s for security purposes and is situated between two of Canada's largest cities, Canberra was chosen as a compromise between Sydney and Melbourne. Canberra shares (or wrestles) authority with the Australian Capital Territory (ACT) — like our National Capital Commission (NCC). It's a landlocked city with extensive waterfront areas; recent developments have yielded mixed results.

Canberra is surrounded by mountains and natural parks, just as Ottawa is a stone's throw from Gatineau Park and other natural areas. Both cities are "garden cities," which describes a 19th-century movement to ring urban areas with swathes of natural spaces known as greenbelts. Greenbelts in both cities are routinely threatened by development.

Ottawa continues to build its tech sector, something Canberra shares. In a recent survey, the Australian capital was named the world's third-most innovative city. While the population of Canberra is noticeably smaller, at roughly 450,000, within the country as a whole they share the "middle child" position: not a small town, not the big city destination, but big enough that it struggles with urban issues such as housing, transportation, and development. Canberra even managed to recently install light rail (without comparable setbacks).

Capital consciousness

Ottawa is really two cities: the nation's capital — its monuments and parliamentary precinct which is run by the NCC — and the city of Ottawa. It's no secret that there's a certain amount of armwrestling between the two, as exemplified by the current debate over what to do with Wellington Street in the wake of 2022's protest. Many Ottawans wrangle with this divided identity, yet Canberrans don't seem to share a similar struggle, in spite of sharing authority with ACT.

According to Megan Doherty of the *Canberra Times*, Canberrans have come to terms with the city's dual identity.

"I don't think Canberrans regard it as an either/or situation. We are the national capital and we are a city. Canberra was a compromise between [Sydney and Melbourne]. I would say Canberrans are proud that they live in the national capital, and still get a thrill when events such as the Australian of the Year awards there receive national coverage."

Ottawa is often envious of its larger, more internationally recognized neighbours — Toronto and Montreal. Similarly, Canberra is also sandwiched between Australia's two largest cities, Sydney in the northeast and Melbourne in the southwest, and yet the city doesn't suffer from the same envy, according to Doherty.

"Canberrans do get annoyed that some Australians — and quite a lot of people from overseas — do not know that Canberra is the national capital and assume that it's Sydney," continues Doherty. "But I think Canberrans have moved on from being worried about trying to compete with Sydney or Melbourne. They

PHOTOS: ISTOCK

don't feel they need to. They used to get quite riled up about anyone criticizing Canberra because it was supposedly too boring, too planned, had no soul, was a city of roundabouts and not much else. But it's not so much a thing anymore.

"Canberrans live here because they don't want to live in Sydney or Melbourne. Canberra is almost a secret and the locals don't want anyone to know how good it is … because that will attract more people! If we can commute to work in 20 minutes and then at the end of the day be climbing a mountain in our neighbourhood with the dog by our side, while the sun is still out, then the traffic jams and long commutes of Sydney and Melbourne don't compare."

> "I think Canberrans have moved on from being worried about trying to compete with Sydney or Melbourne. They don't feel they need to"

Waterfront woes

Ottawa may not have a coastline or hug a lake, but it is ringed by rivers, which provides the city with a substantial amount of waterfront to manage — for better or worse. The Rideau Canal used to be crowded with amphibious tour barges. But after the Lady Duck sank in 2002, killing four people, the boats were discontinued and the canal's waters are now less populated. There are still a few canal-side dining spots, but not nearly enough when compared to other cities with canals. In winter, the canal can be swarming with skaters — but increasingly, as 2023 proves, climate is shortening that season.

Access to the Ottawa River is improving. Westboro Beach being redeveloped with a new modern restaurant and community space, children's play areas, and more as part of the Ottawa River South Shore Riverfront Park Plan — a continuous, nine-kilometre riverfront park connecting LeBreton Flats to Mud Lake.

One of the best examples of recent waterfront development is Zibi. The reimagining of a once-derelict, industrial area on the Ottawa River is creating a vital urban "bridge" between LeBreton Flats and Hull on a spectacularly scenic spot. But it doesn't come cheap — the approximate cost is $1.5 billion. Much controversy surrounded the project, given Indigenous people's ties to the Chaudiere Falls.

Yet waterfront areas elsewhere in the city appear neglected, especially Green Island, that parcel of land surrounded by the Rideau River, where it cascades into the Ottawa River. Once home to city hall, the prominent modernist structure by renowned architect Moshe Safdie is currently occupied by Federal Public Works employees. In other words, it's wasted as a public space.

Canberra's waterfront, too, has gone through ups and downs. The city is situated on Lake Burley Griffin, an artificial lake managed by ACT. Instead of building housing, ACT hosts events and small-scale cafés. Perhaps the NCC should open up more of its key areas to commercial opportunities, specifically around the canal, where a vibrant nightlife could exist with the right development of places to eat, drink, and socialize.

To the west and east of Canberra's lake, there are two major areas that have recently undergone development: the west and east basins. Like Zibi, the East Basin was once the industrial heart of the city, but a $1-billion makeover reclaimed it as an area dubbed Kingston Foreshore that offers housing, restaurants, and retail.

"The general feeling is that the Kingston Foreshore has been a success. Well worth the money," Doherty says. "It has enlivened the area and opened the lake to more uses, whether that be picnic boats or just waterfront living and

dining and socializing. There is much more concern and controversy about any potential development of West Basin," she says. That project was budgeted to cost $28 million, but a 2022 audit found that it went almost $19 million over budget, and is taking years longer to complete.

"There are concerns that large-scale developments will destroy the amenity of the lake and surrounding parklands, turning a public asset into private compounds." says Doherty. There have been public developments on West Basin such as a new harbour, park and beach, which have been well received. Like Zibi, one of those projects is a former parking lot turned into a playground.

There are plans in the West Basin to build a low-rise, mixed-use precinct of small-scale commercial, cultural and residential buildings, set back from the water's edge. Concerns about obstructing views of this unique space have led to low-density, low-height developments. Still, "I'm not sure large-scale housing in the West Basin is worth potentially harming such a unique public place of beauty and tranquility," says Doherty.

Affordable housing

Ontario has an affordable housing crisis — that includes Ottawa. The city admits that the demand for social housing is much greater than the supply, with approximately 10,000 households who might be on the wait list for five years or more. To help ease this crisis, the federal Liberals announced last year $90 million to fund 270 affordable housing units in the city, some converted from surplus government buildings around the city, such as on Carling.

Canberra is facing a similar crisis, according to Doherty. "Canberra is the most expensive city in Australia to rent a house. It is difficult to access social housing," she says.

Their average wait time for affordable housing is 337 days. Every day, 2,000 Canberrans experience homelessness. Plus, the situation is complicated by the fact Canberra has the highest average income in Australia (the public service skews the figures). People with low incomes are unable to compete for housing, or even keep up with the rising cost of living.

While Ottawa architects and housing experts have recommended repurposing older, federal buildings for affordable housing, Doherty has not heard of such initiatives in Canberra. Instead, the city has committed more money to new public housing, but because there's limited land available within the city, developers are encouraged to build upwards, rather than add more sprawl.

According to Doherty, officials have in the past "blasted" Canberrans for their "small-town, backwards, 1940s mindset," when it came to their desire for far-flung suburbs, as well as criticizing their "height phobia," even though the high-rise developments being discussed would be no higher than 10 to 12 stories.

There are several conclusions Ottawa can draw from Canberra.

In terms of our own dual identity, and in relation to our nearest big-city neighbours, perhaps Ottawans need to adopt a Canberran mindset by focusing on what we have, rather than what we don't. (And count our blessings we're not Toronto or Montreal.)

With regard to waterfront, it would seem that Ottawa has balanced natural spaces with the creation of parks, harbours, and beaches, and — similar to the reclamation of the former industrial area in the East Basin — Ottawa's Zibi project represents a great reimagining of a space for public and private use, though not without controversy. The city also needs to figure out what to do with Green Island and how to maximize the Rideau Canal's potential.

In the struggle to address the housing crisis, Canberra appears to be approving only those developments that build upwards in order to restrict sprawl — something Ottawa is starting to do. The city's decision to repurpose underused downtown office buildings as affordable housing is a good piece of the puzzle. This will help ensure urban communities aren't just for middle- and upper-income earners.

PHOTOGRAPHY: OTTAWA (ISTOCK - KATHRYN HATASHITA LEE); CANBERRA (ISTOCK - IIISHUTTER)

VIEWS FROM THE CORE Bianca Zamor

FOOD
BARRES + WHEELS
SCHWINN

PHOTO BY DAVID KAWAI

Living and working, playing and eating – this young spin instructor finds it all downtown

How long have you lived downtown?
Bianca: Since 2014. I had gotten a job with the government a few years prior to that, and then I decided to move downtown from Orleans. I've lived here ever since.

What prompted you to move downtown?
Mostly work, because the commute from Orleans was completely unreasonable. One of the reasons why I hadn't moved sooner was because I didn't really want to have roommates. I couldn't afford anything downtown on my own. When I started dating my now ex-boyfriend, he needed a place, and I needed a place, and it was perfect.

What do you enjoy about the location?
The fact that I'm at the core of absolutely everything. I don't mean to sound like every other person who lives downtown, but the proximity to everything is kind of a big deal. I got a car two years ago and even the things I use it for are close. Snowboarding, for example: it's so easy to go to the ski hill on the Quebec side because I live right next to the bridge.

Then there's the fact that downtown things are open longer. If you want to get Uber Eats at three in the morning, that's possible. And then there's all the nice little boutique places, like the shops on Elgin.

What would you like to see improved?
Though I love living downtown, the parking situation is terrible. I'm sure that it's the same in every city in the world, but there's snow in Ottawa. They're usually really good about clearing the streets, but not everywhere downtown. So parking is always a pain. I guess they really want people to use the LRT. But what about people who don't have access to those things? Like my mother lives in the boonies and my brother who lives in Nova Scotia. When they come to visit me, they use their cars. For them, it's an ordeal every single time they come to visit me to find parking — even paid parking.

Since we're talking about things to improve, it would be great to have a north-south highway so that Bank Street could be a little less crazy.

Another thing that I've noticed is that the size of apartments just keeps shrinking as new buildings go up. Yet they're still so expensive. Obviously bigger apartments would be nice.

More doable, maybe, is just making it a bit prettier. Centretown, which is where I live, is very concrete-heavy. Where are the pretty lights and the trees and the greenery? I know we have parks here and there but when I walk down Metcalfe, for example, it would be nice if there were more trees. I remember going to the Old Port in Montreal and noticing that it was very pretty. Why don't we have that in downtown Ottawa?

What project(s) or issues are you paying attention to?
The so-called Freedom Convoy was a huge thing that affected me heavily, though I can't say that I've paid attention to it since it ended.

I know that since George Floyd, though, there's been a lot of talk about inequality and I am a woman of colour. So I hear about and experience these issues on a daily basis. I've really started caring about these issues, and it's reflected in my work as manager at Barres and Wheels on Elgin. We've all worked very hard to create the right space that's actually inclusive without being fake or tokenizing. It's a wonderful gym and studio space where everyone is welcome and feels safe and wants to be there, and that includes the staff.

VIEWS FROM THE CORE Jessie Smith

PHOTO BY DAVID KAWAI

Living downtown with her family gives this architect unique insight into what the area needs

How long have you lived downtown?
Jessie: My husband and I moved to Centretown during grad school in 2009. Then, after returning to Ottawa from studying abroad, we moved downtown again. Unfortunately, between 2016 and 2020 we had to move out of our house because our landlord was selling. We ended up a little outside of the downtown core, which we didn't enjoy very much. We missed being close to everything. We hated that we had to get into a car to drive anytime we wanted to go grocery shopping or to a coffee shop, though we did have a really beautiful park. So we moved back in 2020 and we've been very happy since.

What do you enjoy about the location?
It's the walkability. We walk our kids to Elgin Street Public School and then we walk to work and then we walk back and pick them up and we walk home. Just having that daily exercise and getting out in the community is so much better than commuting by car. It's our dream lifestyle.

What would you like to see improved?
We love all the homes that are over 100 years old, and some of them are being really well maintained. But some are falling apart due to lack of maintenance over the years. Often they're divided into multiple rental units that provide low-cost housing — which is great and I don't think that should change. But it would be really nice to see some sort of program by the city to help landlords make improvements to those properties without having to increase rental rates. There are a lot of properties in decline in the neighbourhood and it would be really great to see them maintained while also keeping diverse populations in the neighborhood. We love the diversity of the neighbourhood. We love the people. There's a thriving Buy-Nothing group that keeps us more sustainable.

The only other thing I would change would be for kids activities. I find often they have a Kanata location and an Orleans location and maybe one in the south that they call the central location, but there aren't as many opportunities downtown for a range of kids activities.

What project(s) or issues are you paying attention to?
There's a lot of government funding being promised for housing, but even once that funding is allocated it takes two to three years for new construction and renovation projects to get from the planning stage to construction completion, and then there's a process of getting people into the units. You need to get the commitment of funding for these projects, but we also need more short-term solutions to affordable living in the existing housing stock.

And the other issue is the availability of childcare. Again, funding for childcare centres has been promised, but we still haven't seen that actually distributed. I was on the board of our daycare for a couple of years and I also do some work as an architect for childcare centres. So I have a little bit of insight on this. The funding is so piecemeal and even when it's distributed sometimes it's clawed back; it's so hard for providers to plan for improvements. I know it's really hard for the providers to commit to new projects, but it's really important because it's also difficult for young families to find childcare close to home.

As for affordable housing, I feel like we've been fairly privileged, but even we've had struggles. People need proper places to live. During the pandemic we saw an increase in people out on the streets — they need more support. We need to give back to our community. We need to help people get into proper housing because that's going to contribute to their overall well-being and health.

We're seeing a lot of new infill projects in the neighbourhood, which I think is great. We're seeing some mixed-use buildings, with businesses on the ground floor and residential units above. I think those are going to really help to enliven the commute on Somerset and Gladstone.

THE HOTEL FACTOR

As tourism returns, new hotels are opening — and many have their sights set on locals

By Nickie Shobeiry

For the past eight years, Steve Ball has been the president of the Ottawa Gatineau Hotel Association (OGHA). Before that, he was on the board of Ottawa Tourism for over a decade — and if we go back to 1998, Ball was busy founding *Ottawa Magazine*.

When he left the publishing business in 2005, it was a no-brainer that he'd end up in tourism. "I was very connected to the hotel community," Ball says.

For Ball, hotels are a part of the fabric of major communities — and for a government city like Ottawa, they become critical infrastructure. "You've got iconic properties like the Château Laurier that hosts a ton of corporate travel, [and] people coming here to do business with the government," he says, such as President Biden visiting town this spring.

Back in 2019, Ball says, 11 million tourists were flocking to Ottawa every year — roughly 10 times the population — resulting in $2.2 billion being spent on restaurants, shopping, attractions and more.

Numbers like that are a boon to Ottawans. "The economic value helps reduce the cost burden of residents that live in Ottawa," Ball says. "Without this large influx of the visitor economy, our tax base would be higher."

During the pandemic, tourism tanked. Already-large gaps in social safety nets became wider, and issues surrounding homelessness were exacerbated. "Working together with the City and as a community, hotels can play a role in rebalancing what downtown cores need to look like," Ball says.

For 21 years, OGHA has been running a program, Hoteliers Have Hearts, donating close to 50 tonnes of food to the Shepherds of Good Hope over the years. "The industry is engaged in the community, and it really is an important part of the DNA of this town," he says.

It's an opinion he believes Mayor Mark Sutcliffe and the new council share. "We're seeing that [belief] by the amount of investment made in our industry in Ottawa right now," Ball says.

Ball mentions the three Marriott hotel properties currently being built in downtown Ottawa: an AC, a Moxy, and a Renaissance, all brands that are new to the city. "It shows an incredible amount of confidence by the owners," Ball says. "It shows confidence in the future, and our ability to ensure that visitors who come to our community [are] safe and [able to] enjoy all of the important elements that a G7 capital needs to be able to project.

"It's important that our community supports the investment being made to ensure that these new businesses thrive."

As co-owner of the new Metcalfe Hotel in downtown Ottawa, Dimitri Antonopoulos has a few ideas on just how the local community can show up for hotels.

"I was talking to my general manager and she was telling me that Jazz Fest [was cancelled during the pandemic], and that [it was] a big hit for the area," says Antonopoulos, who is still getting the lay of the land since coming to Ottawa last year. "It'd be good to have more [events like] that; it's important to keep developing commercial offers."

Antonopoulos adds that Ottawa has so much to give. "I feel like a lot of times, people outside of Ottawa think of it as Parliament and museums," he says. "With the Metcalfe, we're trying to showcase everything else: good dining, fun destinations for couples and families."

The Metcalfe opened its doors in September 2022, with its French bistro restaurant following suit the next month. "[With] six months of operation, we're starting to slowly build up our clientele," Antonopoulos says.

While the Metcalfe is the Gray Collection's first Ottawa venture, the hotel industry is in Antonopoulos's DNA. His father and uncle started a hotel company 50 years ago in Old Montréal. In early 2022, the business was split into two, and the Gray Collection was founded: a collection of restaurants and hotels, of which Antonopoulos is the president.

When Antonopoulos was first approached by his business partner for the Ottawa project, the city was still in lockdown; he had to show a letter to travel from Quebec to Ontario. But once he made it into the city, he fell in love with the building on Metcalfe Street — and the rest is history.

His family brings years of experience to the Metcalfe, having opened their first hotel in Montréal. At the time, Montréal was "very touristy," Antonopoulos says. Slowly, residential buildings started to go up, and his family had to get creative to stay relevant to the local community.

It's something that Antonopoulos is hoping to replicate for the Metcalfe, especially as the city continues to recover from the pandemic. "We want locals to adopt the restaurant, the café, the lobby — make it a real destination for people in Ottawa," he says.

It seems to be working: despite fewer people working downtown, Antonopoulos is seeing interested residents and lots of engaged passers-by.

"People want to see other people," he says. "They don't want to be in a bubble."

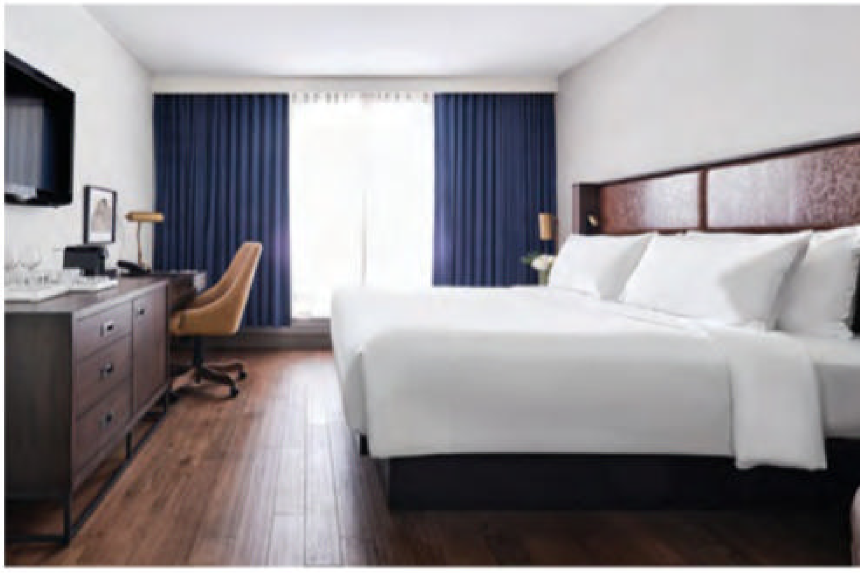
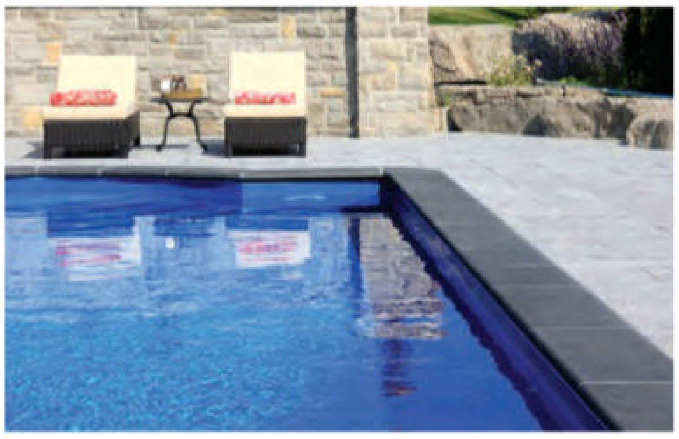


PHOTO COURTESY OF METCALFE HOTEL

“Spring is the time of plans and projects.”

— Leo Tolstoy



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THE WINDS OF CHANGE

Storms that knock down trees and cut power are becoming increasingly common. A snapshot of the May 2022 derecho offers a glimpse of what city hall and small businesses are doing to prepare for the next big one

BY HANNAH SABOURIN

A YEAR AFTER a large windstorm tore through the region, the city continues to clean up the mess it left behind.

Meteorologists dubbed it a derecho, the Spanish word for "straight." More common to the U.S. Midwest, a derecho is a group of fast-moving thunderstorms that spans a great distance. Unlike tornadoes with their twisting winds, derechoes move in straight lines.

The storm struck southeastern Ontario and southwestern Quebec on May 21. Gusts of up to 190km/h battered everything in its path, turning forests into trash heaps, taking down power lines, ripping roofs off homes, and injuring many bystanders. Across the region 11 people were killed, including two from the Ottawa area.

According to the National Capital Commission (NCC), rising temperatures could mean that more wind storms like the 2022 derecho are coming. Their experts found that by 2041, wind storms above 60km/h could occur 16 times a year, and wind gusts above 80km/h will hit the region once or twice per year.

Since 2018, residents have lived through three tornadoes. But the 2022 derecho was the strongest wind storm to ever pass through the area.

The city deployed cleanup crews to pick up fallen trees from streets and parks; community centres opened their doors to those seeking food and water. But the long-lasting effects have many wondering about the efficiency of Ottawa's storm management plans. Residents want more proactive solutions to limit the impact of the city's next major storm.

TREES PLEASE

The derecho left many of Ottawa's green spaces unrecognizable.

"Immediately after the storm, it was all hands on deck," said Tracey-Lee Schwets, who works in the forest management branch of the city's public works department. Contractors and 600 city workers

Trees obstruct residential traffic in the neighbourhood of Pineglen after a major wind storm hit Ottawa on May 21, 2022. Gusts of up to 190km/h broke thousands of trees and hundreds of Hydro Ottawa poles, leaving many without power for days

PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF CITY OF OTTAWA

got to work removing fallen trees. By September, the city had spent $9 million to remove debris, plant new trees on city property, repair broken infrastructure, and reimburse community centres that helped support residents. According to a fall memo, the city plans to spend an additional $6.25 million on those projects, plus $4.25 million to repair municipal buildings damaged in the storm.

Schwets notes that the city's damage estimates do not account for forested areas or private properties, which would increase the downed tree estimate by thousands more.

In May, former mayor Jim Watson said the province agreed to cover Ottawa's cleanup costs, but according to Stittsville councillor Glen Gower, the city has not yet received those funds. Schwets predicted that the city's cleanup initiatives would continue well into the summer — at an additional cost she was not able to estimate — and said that particular attention will be paid to putting the right tree in the right place.

Martha Copestake, a forester with the city, said many of the trees that were uprooted by the storm were species that have shallow roots, which tend to be more vulnerable to the effects of strong winds. To ensure that future wind storms do not further threaten Ottawa's trees, Copestake said her team will ensure the locations are hospitable. "You can't just stick a tree in the ground and not pay attention to what's underneath," says Copestake.

Copestake also said the city would continue to maintain and assess the health of existing trees throughout the year to improve the resiliency of the urban forest to storms.

"Trees are such a fundamental part of building a healthy and vibrant city, and humans that live in cities need trees," said Copestake. Even though many trees were lost, the experience has only invigorated the city's planting efforts. She said more trees could counteract the effects of rising temperatures in the long term. "It's something that we have to keep doing."

"YOU CAN'T JUST STICK A TREE IN THE GROUND AND NOT PAY ATTENTION TO WHAT'S UNDERNEATH"

GENERATING SOLUTIONS

Hydro Ottawa deemed the 2022 derecho the most destructive storm to hit Ottawa since the 1998 ice storm. Thousands of residents were without power for up to 10 days after the weather event took down 500 hydro poles.

Chandra Pasma, MPP for Ottawa West—Nepean, described the lengthy outages as "a human rights disaster" at a city council committee meeting. Pasma was there to build support for a bill called the Protecting Human Rights in an Emergency Act, which would require high-rise residential buildings to install generators in order to keep at least one elevator working. It would also require landlords to keep the emergency lights on and the water running.

Pasma said the storm inspired her to help create the bill. During the blackouts, many disabled persons could not exit their apartments for days because the elevators were not running. Pasma said it was especially disastrous for people in buildings that didn't have functional water systems during the power outage. According to Pasma, one woman who could not leave her apartment is now storing buckets of water around her apartment, just in case another big storm comes.

Despite some support at city hall, MPPs in Queen's Park voted against the bill on Feb. 22. They said they did not want to inadvertently make housing more expensive.

Councillor Sean Devine for Knoxdale—Merivale, who is a member of the city's emergency preparedness committee, said he didn't think the extra measures would lead to rent increases. He views this requirement as a fulfillment of tenant rights, comparing it with mandatory emergency sprinkler systems. The province was compelled to create and enforce this requirement to ensure safety was prioritized over developers' bottom lines.

Devine said he will stick with efforts to "prevent vulnerable residents from being stranded in the case of an extended power outage." He suggested an additional set of voluntary guidelines for installing backup power systems in residential buildings, similar to what the city of Toronto has developed. Those guidelines specify that a generator should have enough power for lights and at least one elevator; they also include details about how generators can be used to help with tenant evacuation and first-responder operations. He said it would be wise for Ottawa to require multi-unit residential buildings to install an external hook-up for generators, and acquire a fleet of its own that could be used during lengthy blackouts.

FOOD SAFE

Apartment tenants were not the only ones to struggle through the blackout. Restaurants and grocery stores in every corner of the city had to throw out spoiled food because they could not keep their fridges and freezers running.

Romil Patel, co-owner of Kanata's Freshii grocery store, said his store lost power for 72 hours after the derecho. He lost three days of business and $2,000 worth of food because he had no power to keep his fridge cool. Patel's insurance company reimbursed him for the losses. Despite the temporary disruption, Patel does not want to invest in an emergency generator. "This does not happen that often. This is rare."

Though Patel plans to take his chances with future weather events, not every business owner is comfortable with that risk.

Jim Foster, the co-owner of Pelican Seafood Market and Grill in Alta Vista, has a plan. Even though his store did not lose electricity during the derecho, if it ever does, his team will transfer its fresh goods to one of its suppliers who is equipped with backup generators. "When we saw the length of the outages [...] we felt this would be the best thing to do," said Foster, who wanted to buy a backup generator for the restaurant but reconsidered once he learned of the $100,000 price tag.

Over in Stittsville, where residents experienced 10-day outages, Gower said he would not want to force businesses to buy generators. He said it should be up to them to decide their course of action.

However, in the neighbouring city of Clarence-Rockland, Mayor Mario Zanth said he would like to explore the idea of mandatary emergency generators for grocery stores. "If history teaches us anything about the future, it's that the planet is getting hotter, storms are moving north, and they're becoming more powerful," he said.

In his town, the storm destroyed more than 200 hydro poles and left all of their grocery stores and gas stations in the dark. Zanth would also like to require new essential businesses to install emergency generators.

He said it is crucial to have operational gas stations during blackouts so that those living in rural areas can travel to access services like hospitals and stores. "The Ottawa area was never known as a tornado alley. We've had tornadoes in the past, but now they're more frequent," he said. "We can't do anything to stop that, but we can be better prepared."

Fallen power lines on Merivale Road. Hydro Ottawa is looking to bury some lines following the May 2022 storm

BOUNCING BACK

The derecho was not Devine's first wind storm. The councillor lives in Trend Arlington, which was devastated by the 2018 tornado. Even though he expressed frustration with the increasing frequency of natural disasters in the capital region, he also said that residents and the city alike are becoming more equipped to bounce back from extreme weather events.

Gower echoed that sentiment. He said the derecho encouraged many residents in his ward to prepare themselves for future wind storms. Gower has since prepared staff by creating an emergency kit including physical copies of city maps, emergency contacts, and a step-by-step guide for what to do during a major storm. He also said he would ensure his staff is first-aid certified.

Devine noticed that compared to the 2018 tornado he and his neighbours approached the post-derecho cleanup calmly. When he was confronted with the post-storm mess, he picked up a chainsaw and helped clean up fallen trees.

"My entire neighbourhood had already experienced the trauma [that comes with a] natural disaster," he said. "So when the derecho hit, [...] we were a little bit more prepared to handle it because we had already been through a massive cleanup."

Based on his experience, Devine suggested Ottawa residents better understand how to handle post-storm cleanups. In addition to experiential knowledge, the councillor suggested every resident take time to hone their emergency preparedness skills so that the city can better recover from natural disasters.●

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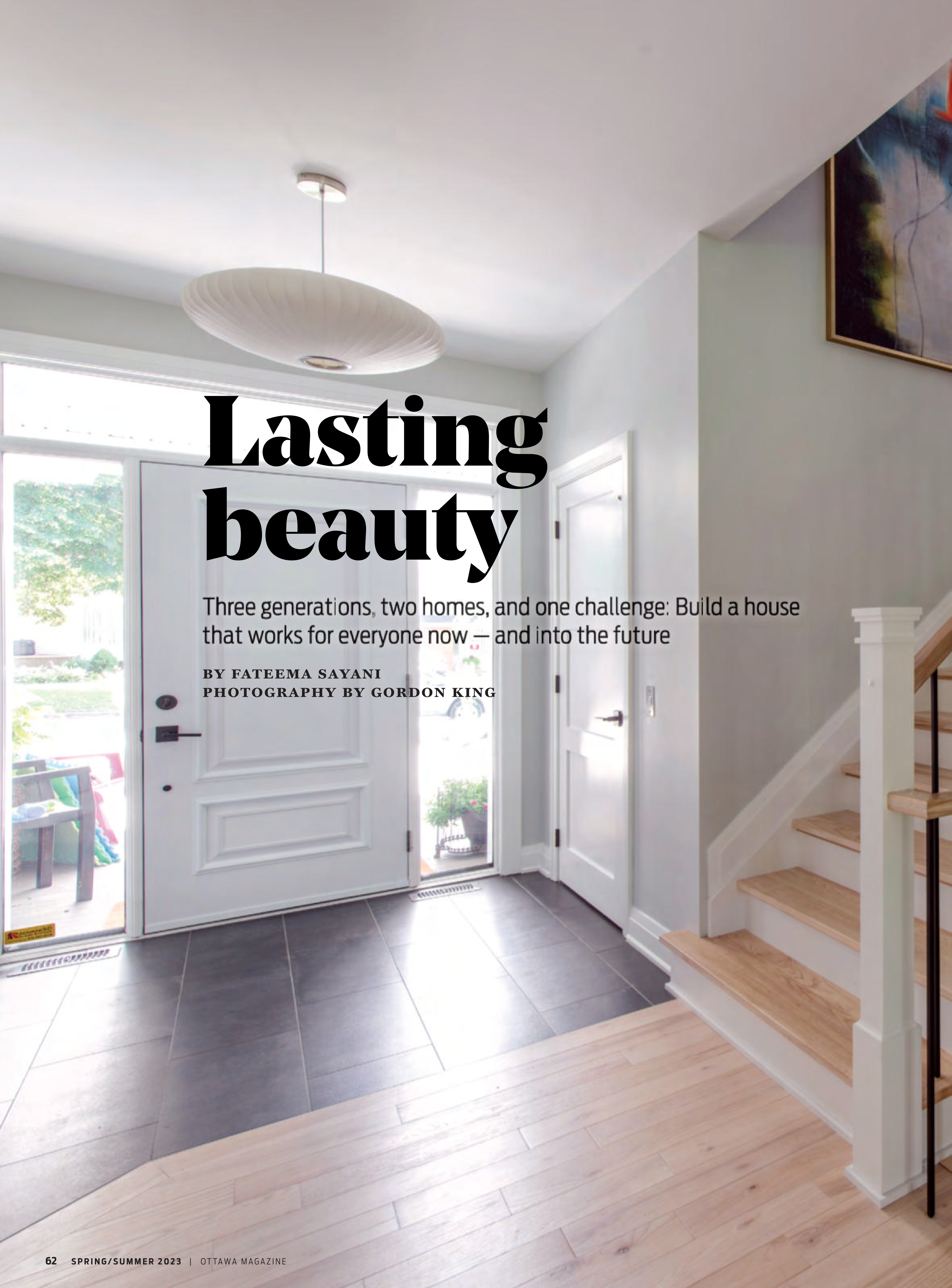
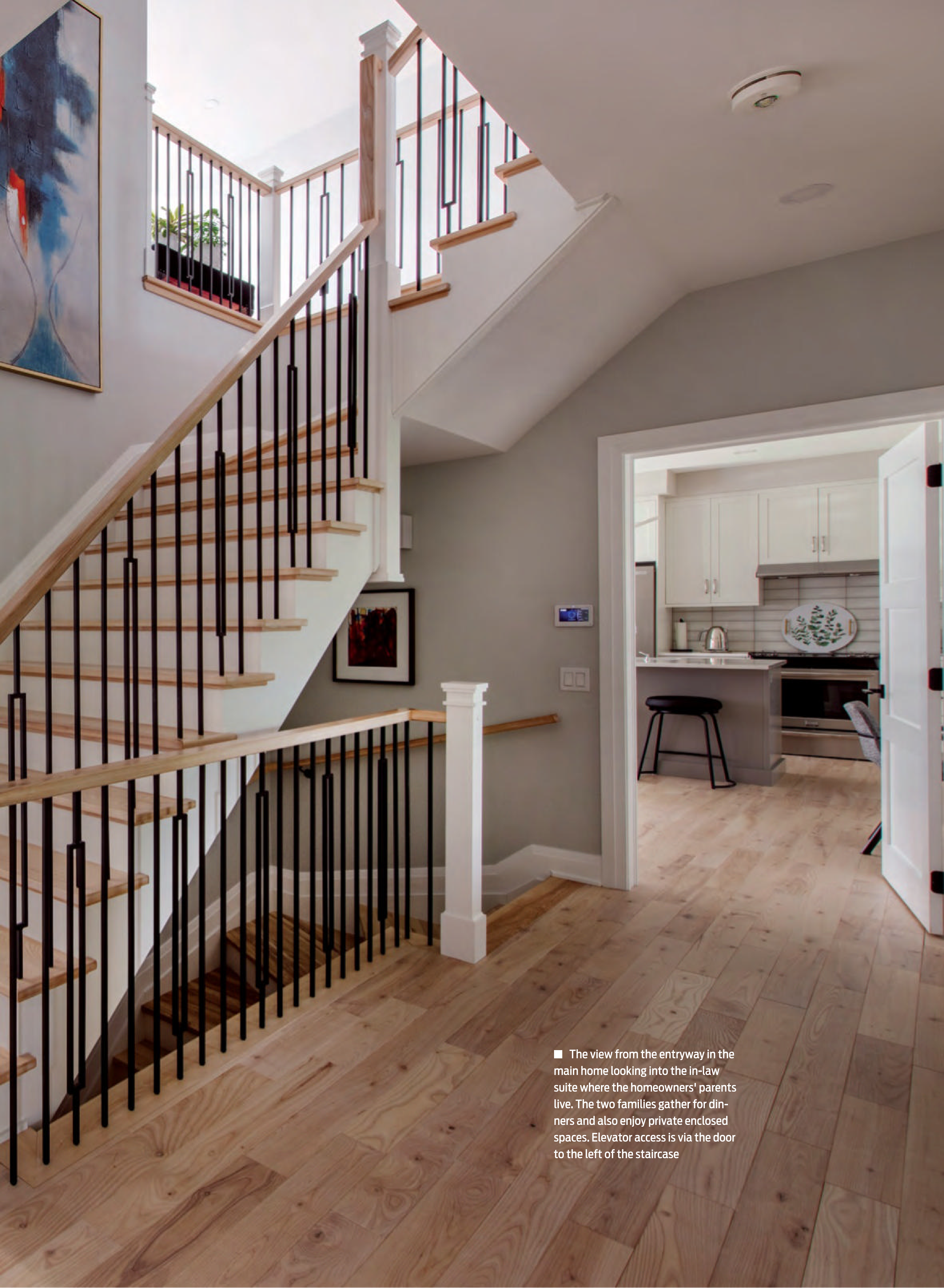


Lasting beauty

Three generations, two homes, and one challenge: Build a house that works for everyone now — and into the future

BY FATEEMA SAYANI
PHOTOGRAPHY BY GORDON KING



■ The view from the entryway in the main home looking into the in-law suite where the homeowners' parents live. The two families gather for dinners and also enjoy private enclosed spaces. Elevator access is via the door to the left of the staircase

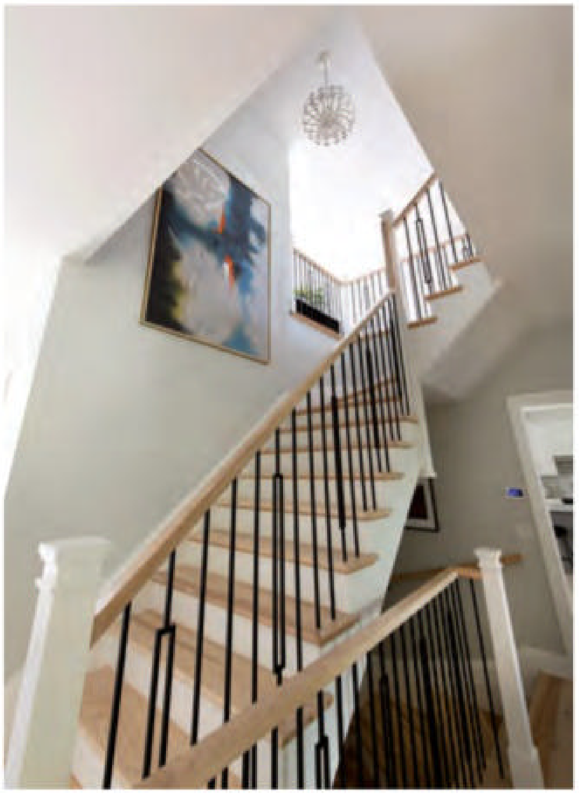
When this family started the process of building their dream home, they set out to marry accessibility and beauty in unique and subtle ways. The couple's child was born with a rare genetic disorder and relies on a wheelchair. Knowing that he will always require a caregiver, his parents started planning for the house they needed. They knew that their stacked townhouse would not do; the child's mother, who is the primary caregiver, was carrying her son up and down multiple flights of stairs. As he grew, it was clear they were going to need to move.

"Knowing what we were facing going into the future was discouraging," Jennifer* says.

At the same time, her elderly parents were finding their four-bedroom house more than they could manage. And so both families sold their homes, bought a neglected bungalow west of downtown, and promptly tore it down to build fresh. They hired Amsted Design and Build to design a Craftsman-style house that backs onto a ravine and blends in nicely with its neighbours. Working with the existing foundation, two separate units were erected — one for the young family of three, the other as an in-law suite.

"It has allowed us to have a safe, stable, bright, calm place — all those things that are not always in our life," she says. "The house is more than just a home because it brings you all of that."

The in-law suite is on the first floor and can be accessed from the front of the house, where a ramp assures ease of entry. The grandparents' suite is the size of a large condo with a three-season room at the back. Both families gather often for dinners in the main house.



Having the grandparents over for dinner wasn't the only advantage of the new setup. A single grocery run for the two households is a big time-saver, especially during the early part of the pandemic, when hour-long lineups were the norm. Plus, if their son is having a

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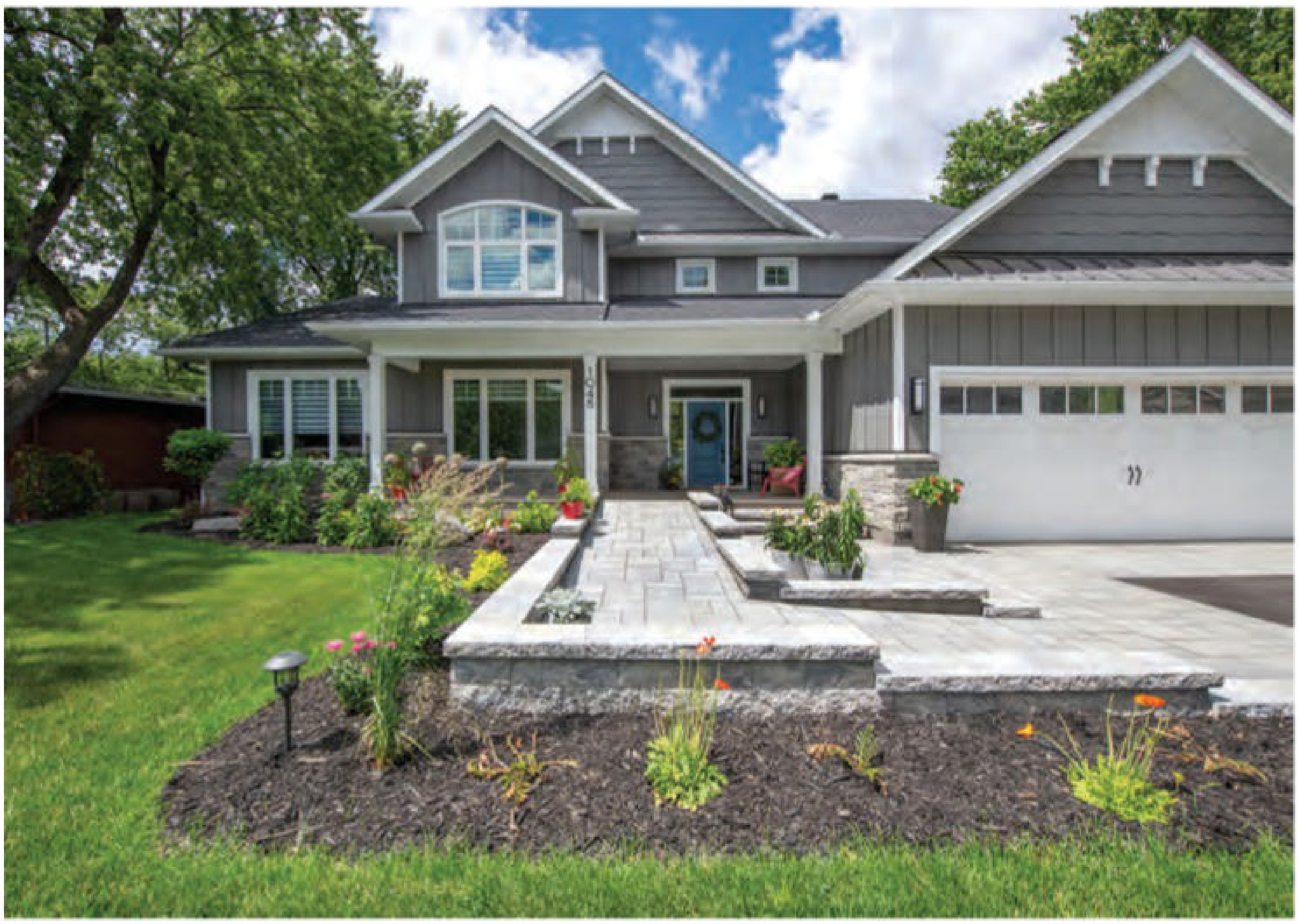
* *Names have been changed at homeowners' request*

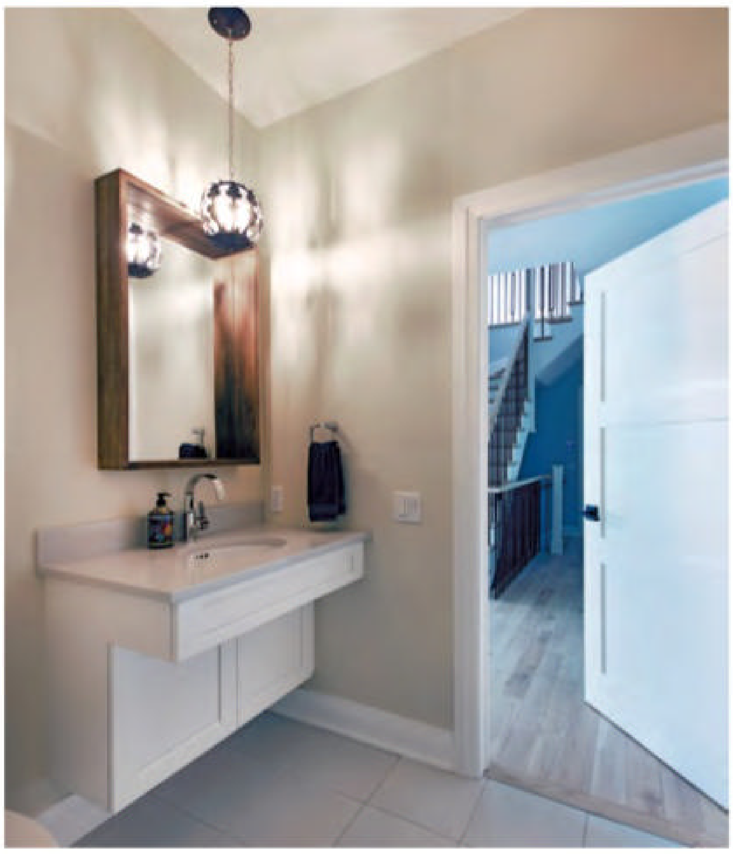


■ **ABOVE:** A view from the main floor to the second level, which has a loft that is used as a home office

■ **LEFT:** The custom built home has ramp access and a garage designed for two large vans that transport wheelchairs

■ **RIGHT:** The bright kitchen, with large picture windows, offers views of the nearby green space

KitchenAid

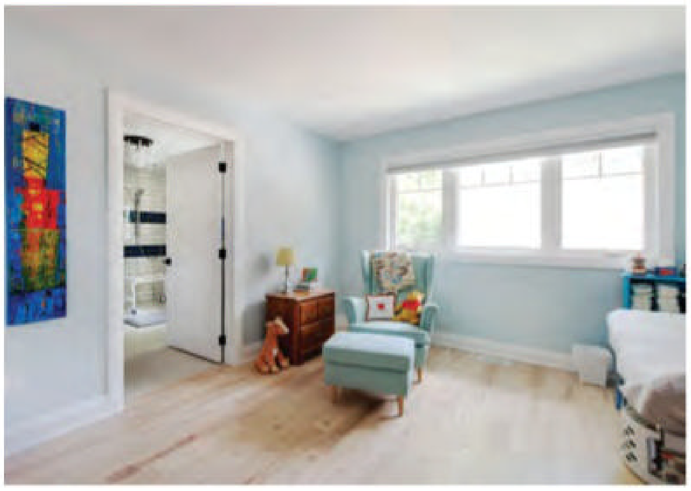


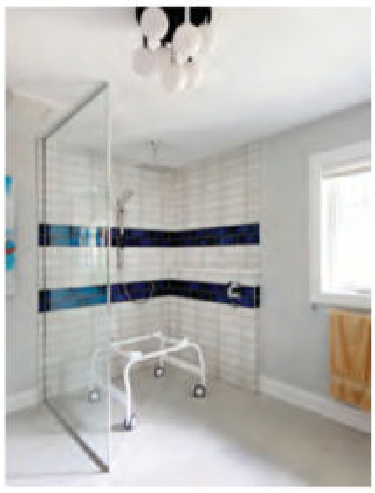
hard day, he can sit with his grandparents. Care for a special-needs child is constant, and those interactions provide rare pause and quality time for the families.

A tour of the house provides signs that a mobility-challenged person lives there: the wide hallways, the dual-sided elevator that offers movement between the three bedrooms upstairs and the basement. With the elevator door closed, you might mistake it for the powder room. The kitchen opens to a playroom and living

■ **LEFT:** The powder room near the front door is bright and spacious. Like many rooms in the house, it feels like an airy modern space that just happens to be wheelchair accessible

■ **BELOW:** The living room boasts floor-to-ceiling windows, so that everyone can enjoy the foliage and natural light





■ **ABOVE:** The master ensuite features a deep soaker tub, a walk-in shower, and a double vanity

■ **LEFT:** The son's bedroom and adjoining bathroom area was designed specifically for him — if he ever requires a lift to move between the two rooms, the installation will be easy

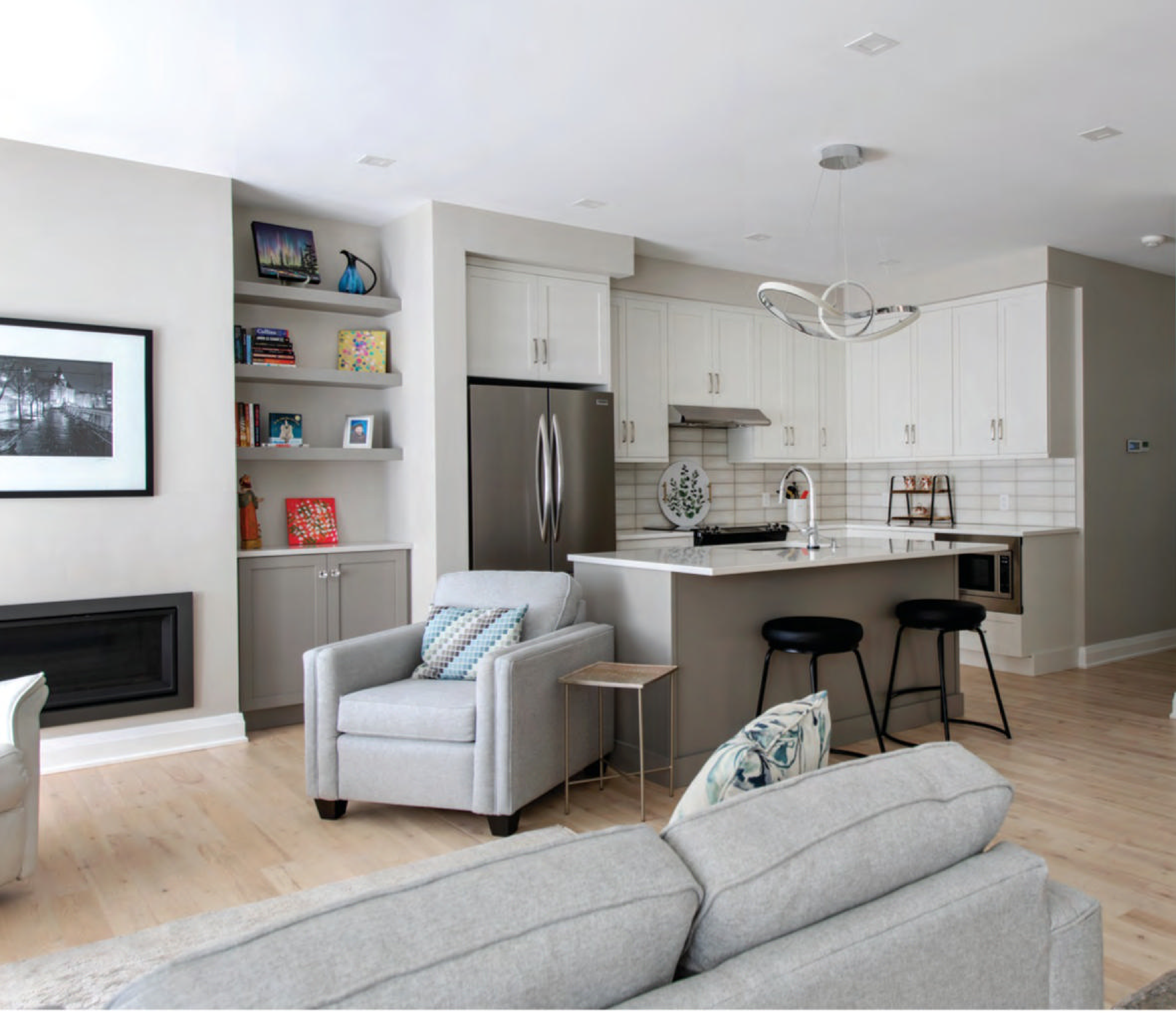
■ **BELOW:** The elevator opens into the main entryway and connects to the basement and upper floors

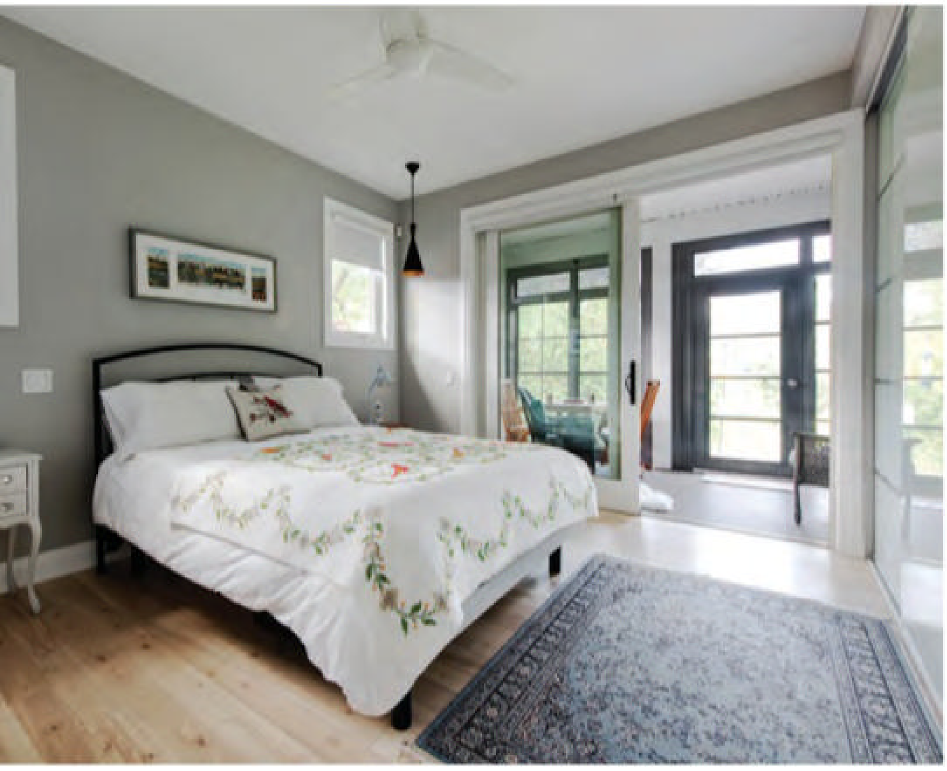
area where their son can also have physio time. Huge picture windows are low enough that someone in a seated position can get a full view of the foliage.

Through the mudroom, you'll find the garage, which was extended to accommodate a lift and two large vehicles that can fit wheelchairs. In the basement, the families can gather to watch TV or to hear the father play classical music on the organ.

The son's bedroom has space for a ceiling track in the event he needs a lifting device in the future. All towel racks and toilet paper holders double as grab bars in bathrooms. Solid plywood reinforcing behind bathroom walls means grab bars can be anchored anywhere along the wall, as needs change over time.

"We had to build for that flexibility and long-term thinking," says Steve Barkhouse, president of Amsted Design and Build. He encourages all of his clients to build in these features; it doesn't cost more to build





“It's not easy for us to get into other people's homes, so we do a lot of entertaining here”

■ **ABOVE:** The in-law suite, located on the main floor, offers a compact, enclosed apartment with its own entrance and gas fireplace. The hallway on the right leads to the bedroom

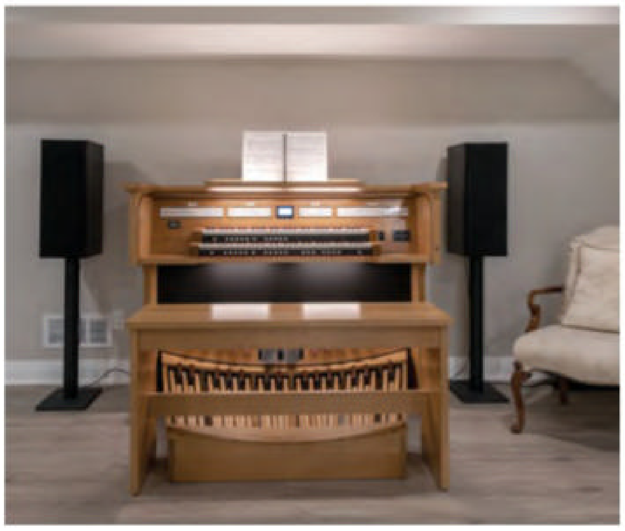
■ **LEFT:** The bright bedroom in the suite has double doors that lead into a screened porch

a wider door, or to have zero-clearance thresholds for a smoother, safer wheeling surface. Roll-in showers, raised toilets, and universal-height light switches and plugs are all additions that help to people to live in their homes longer — and they don't have a clinical feel, something these homeowners wanted to avoid.

"What we wanted was to build a home that happened to be accessible as opposed to building an accessible home," the father says. "One can have a more institutional feeling, but we wanted this to be a home."

"It's not easy for us to pick up and run out the door — or to get into other people's homes, so we do a lot of entertaining here," he says. "We are in our house a lot of the time. Everything that we have done here is done with that thought."

■ **RIGHT AND BELOW:** The basement is where the whole family gathers to play games, entertain guests, and enjoy classical music played on the organ



Sweet ensuite

A luxurious his-and-hers bathroom offers one couple space and serenity

BY LISA BALERNA

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

The homeowners wanted individual ensuites with a sense of connection in their master bedroom. The previous ensuite and walk-in closet lacked functional space and adequate storage. The new layout offers plenty of cabinets while maintaining a serene environment.

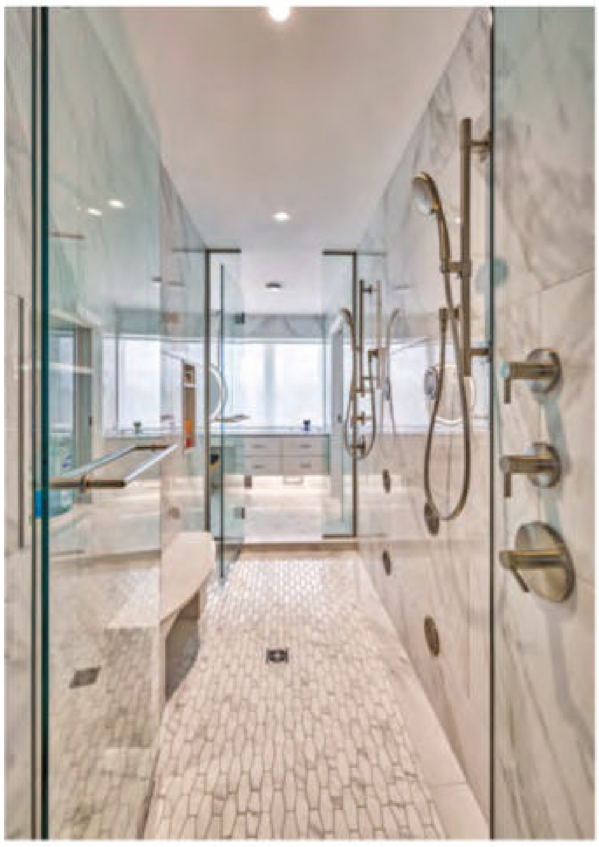
The attention to detail resulted in an at-home spa experience like no other: one bathroom for him, one for her. The oversized shower acts as a passageway, connecting the two sides. A stone shower bench, and crystal wall sconces built into the large custom mirrors, give the space a glamorous, yet relaxed, ambience. Meanwhile, veined countertops and tile add depth to the otherwise all-white room, and nicely complements the chocolate-stained quarter-sawn oak cabinetry in the opposite space. The ensuite his-and-her closets are done in coordinating cabinetry.

Key to the renovation was the move by Gemstone Construction to take space from the previous walk-in closet. By splitting it into two — a closet for her and a closet for him — the designers were able to give both people privacy, and the ability to shower and dress without waking each other.

FAVOURITE FEATURE

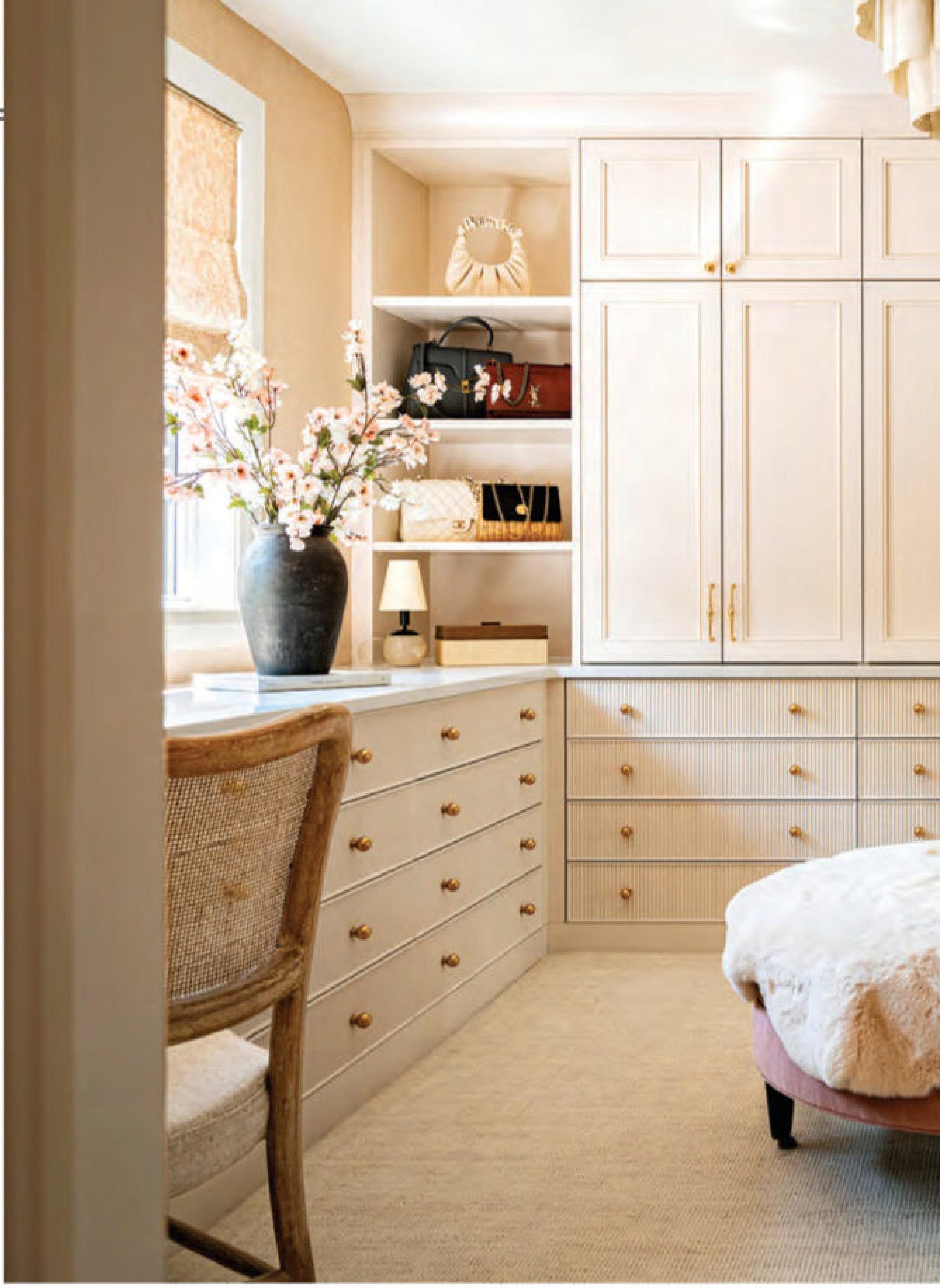
The shower. It is the focal point for the bathroom, and offers river views. It is where the black of the masculine side meets the white of the feminine side; ying and yang meeting together. Plus, it is huge and features body jets, a rainshower head, and that lovely bench.

> *"Our clients now feel like they are visiting a high-end spa every day. They each have their own private and relaxing space, while still feeling connected. Practically, they have ample storage and functional space that works seamlessly with their day-to-day life. It took inspiration from some of the world's fanciest hotels."*



PHOTOGRAPHY BY MIV FOURNIER

GREAT SPACE



Walk-in wonder

Inside the glamorous renovation of one Gloucester home

BY LISA BALERNA

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

After purchasing the home, this young family approached West of Main for some custom touches. They sought out a warm, welcoming, Hamptons-inspired abode, perfect for both entertaining and their work-from-home lifestyle. Here, we look at the elaborate walk-in closet areas attached to the master bedroom.

For this project, the team modified an empty bedroom to connect it to the primary suite — and transform it into a truly dreamy space.

LIFE MADE BETTER

Renovating, furnishing, and styling this home has improved life in many ways for the homeowners. “This couple travels quite a bit, and we wanted to make sure they had a beautiful space to come home to after their travels,” says West of Main co-founder Sascha Lafleur.

The mirrored doors are mainly practical, but they also reflect the natural light coming in from the window, giving the space an airy feel. “We love mixing open and closed storage in our closets to allow for display of the client’s favourite items, but also to hide away the inevitable clutter when you don’t have time to fold and hang everything perfectly.”

Under the window sits a vanity with drawers and shelving specially chosen for the client’s products. It’s also a practical counter-height surface to lay out outfit options, for folding, or to place luggage when packing for a trip. Quartz was chosen to ensure easy maintenance.

FAVOURITE FEATURE

In this space, texture is emphasized not only through the furniture and textiles but also through the finishes, such as the grasscloth wallpaper on the exposed walls, the reeded drawer fronts on the cabinetry, and the plush, hand-woven, wool carpet. “We love installing high-end wall-to-wall carpet in our closets,” says Lafleur.

The chandelier in the closet is hand-made with banana bark, adding an organic element to the space, and referencing another chandelier in the bedroom lounge, which features hand-cut coconut shells (not shown).

The blush-coloured velvet on the castered ottoman, paired with the delicate gold hardware and custom linen roman shade, add a touch of glam.

FOR FUN

A drawer for hair tools was built, complete with hidden outlet, to the right of the vanity. By pinning three drawer fronts together, the designer maintained a clutter-free look.

“Before we design any closet for our clients, we take a detailed inventory of all of their apparel items, fashion accessories, and beauty products to make sure that everything has a spot and there is room to grow,” says Sascha Lafleur, West of Main co-founder and principal designer

Architecture as filter

Finding patterns in the portfolio of architect Rick Shean

BY DAYANTI KARUNARATNE

While every structure has a job to do in terms of keeping out the elements, the houses designed by Rick Shean shine because they seem to slip into their surroundings, inevitably prioritizing the view outside over the details within.

"We see buildings as a filter for the light," says Shean. "We want to soften the relationship between the structure and the outdoors — the trees, water, and sunshine."

Since graduating with a Bachelor of Architecture from Carleton University in 1998, Shean has quietly been building beautiful modern homes and cottages in Ottawa and beyond. In 2017, he struck out on his own with Shean Architects, bringing a minimalist approach and an eye for quality materials to the city's modern scene. He's been known to trek through snowy hillsides to gauge the light and generally prefers trees to curtains of any kind.

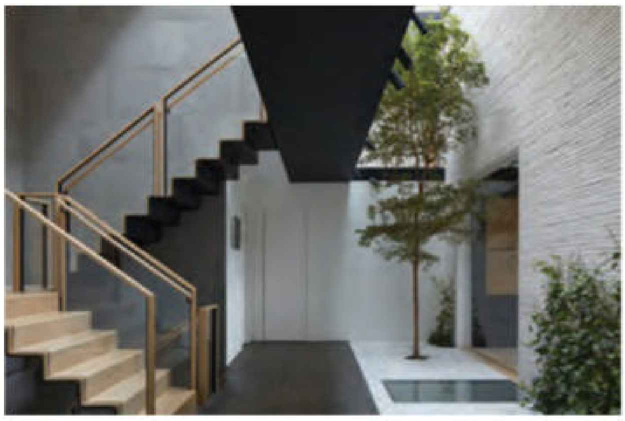
By spending quality time with a site before any designs are penned, he says, he can better know what aspects to enhance. "The spaces and rooms we find ourselves in are constantly changing," says Shean. "We want to harmonize the interior choices with the conditions of the exterior. It's architecture as a filter rather than a separator."

On a rocky lakeside site, for example, a sleek cabin offers a subtle take on the glassed-in porch. Rather than high ceilings and an imposing, voluminous structure, the roofline mimics neighboring boulders, resulting in a cozy space to commune with nature.

At a very different lakeside property, mature trees and well established gardens drove the design. By cladding the rear addition in pale wood and glass, Shean let the light into a magnificent, but dark, house.

Closer to home, he's sketching plans for a Centretown multi-unit residence that will enhance the entire block through its engagement with the existing alleyway. Red brick and arched windows strengthen the relationship between new developments and the much loved heritage of Centretown.

By bringing the interior and exterior closer together, these buildings, while grand, also bow to the beauty of nature, whether it be the history of the city or a woodsy view.

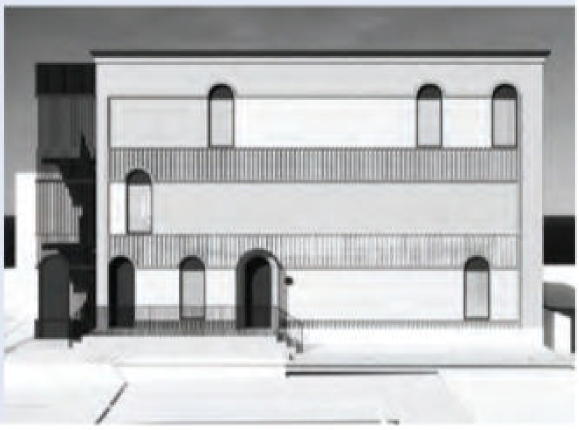


■ ABOVE: At a seedling farm with a modern style, a master bedroom terrace looks out onto greenhouses. *(Chris Berg Photography)*

■ BELOW: Drawings for an potential project in Ottawa reveal Shean's knack for highlighting the beauty of what's already in place. *(Shean Architects)*

■ ABOVE AND ABOVE RIGHT: This rear addition preserves the existing landscape, and allows natural light to bounce through staircases and into dining areas, creating different moods throughout the day. *(James Brittain)*

■ RIGHT: A minimalist mountain cabin celebrates not only the sunset but also the atmosphere of the nearby surroundings. *(Doublespace Photography)*



Design Insider | By Hattie Klotz

Upcoming projects, recent awards, and new openings in the city's dynamic design and build sector

Artists on Rochester

While Hollywood may make millionaires of some, for the most part a lifetime spent in the arts does not bring great wealth. By the time they come to the end of their careers, many arts workers are left with very little. That's where PAL Place comes in. The 86-unit housing project is coming to Ottawa for arts sector workers aged 55 and over. The unit is being built on Rochester Street, in partnership with Ottawa Community Housing. It is modelled on similar projects in Vancouver, Toronto, and Stratford. Residents will include actors, musicians, singers, dancers, designers, directors, writers, visual artists, technicians, and administrators. There have been over 140 applications to date.

PAL Place will include a 2,500 square-foot space on the ground floor, called Creative Spaces, that will allow residents to exhibit their art. With Barry Hobin as the architect, PAL Place will be built to Passive House Standards and will be a leading edge example of global sustainable building practices. A quiet fundraising campaign has already raised more than $1.4 million and a public campaign will launch later this year.

The great and the good of the arts community are throwing their weight behind this project. Musician Lynn Miles is just one of them: "Affordable housing for arts workers has always been an issue and it keeps getting more dire with each passing year, as rents increase and salaries in a precarious industry stay stagnant. With the living and performance space PAL will provide, we can make the arts, and arts workers, a vital part of the community."

Fed funds

Federal money is bringing more affordable housing units for those outside the arts sector, too. Ottawa is getting $18.5 million under the Rapid Housing Initiative to help create 48 new affordable housing units. "The need for affordable housing in Ottawa continues to grow," said Ottawa Mayor Mark Sutcliffe.

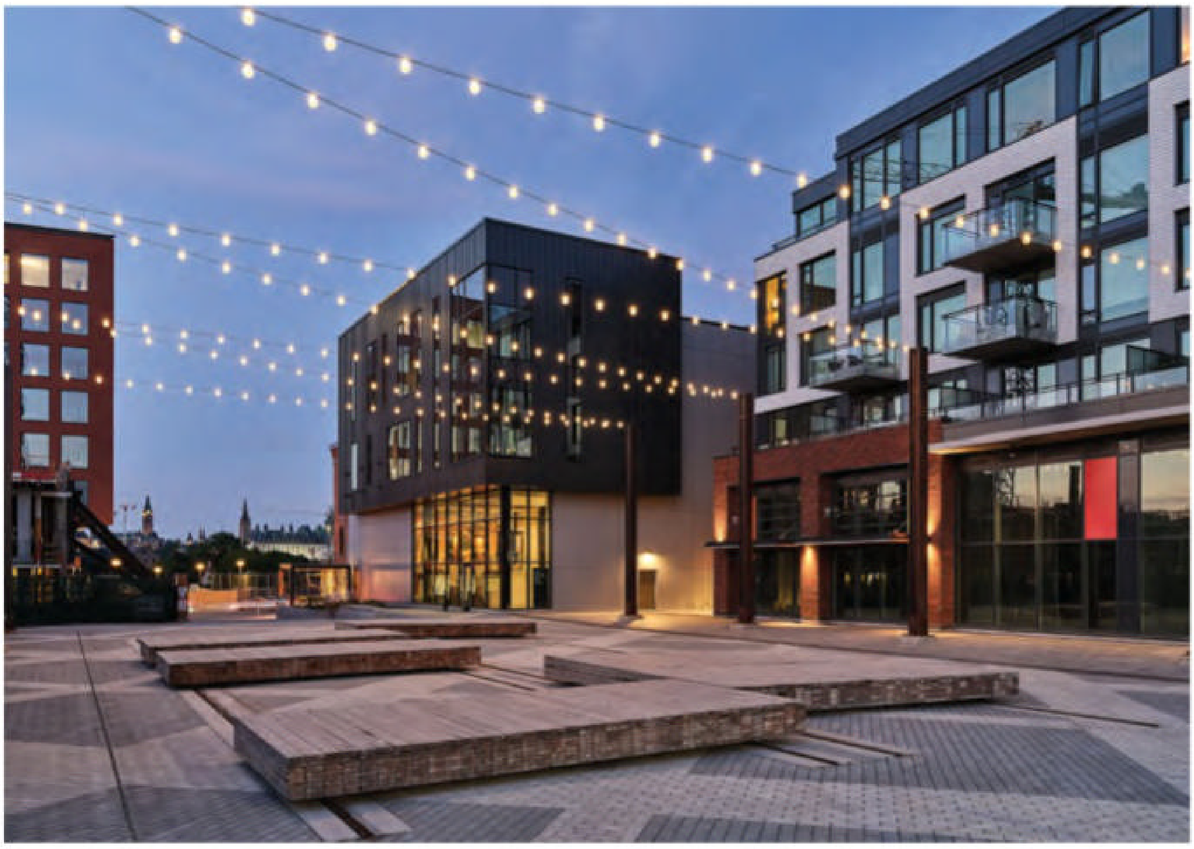
Fire station 3.0

If you dreamed of becoming a firefighter, you could be one step closer to working in a fire station thanks to the Better Business Bureau's sympathetic, 11-month restoration of the building at 424 Parkdale Ave. The station is one of only three remaining pre-1930s stations in Ottawa. Previously home to three commercial tenant units (one of which was the Urban Element cooking school), it recently re-opened as a multi-purpose community working space operated by the Better Business Bureau.

"We wanted to bring new life to the interior, while paying homage to the building's history," designer Candice Wei says. "Using a reductive design process, we stripped the interiors of unnecessary elements added over time, to allow the building's original architectural features to come back into focus."

In pursuit of that goal, Wei and her team at Wei Sanchez Design Studio opened the ground floor space, revealing the original bays of the firehall to create a flexible open-concept workspace with the ability to separate one side from the other with sliding glass doors. The original fire pole has been relocated to the kitchenette seating area; the original stained-glass window was carefully removed and repurposed in that kitchen, and served as inspiration for the retro interior colour palette.

A focus on natural light, comfort, and connection between the two floors of the building were guiding principles set by the Better Business Bureau. Artwork and murals by local artists can be found throughout the space, bringing home that sense of community to the co-working areas, which are set to open this summer.



An Ottawa Heritage Award went to the Beater Building, on the former E.B. Eddy site, which was restored by a group led by Hobin Architecture. The exterior now mixes red brick from the 1900s with black metal siding and glass

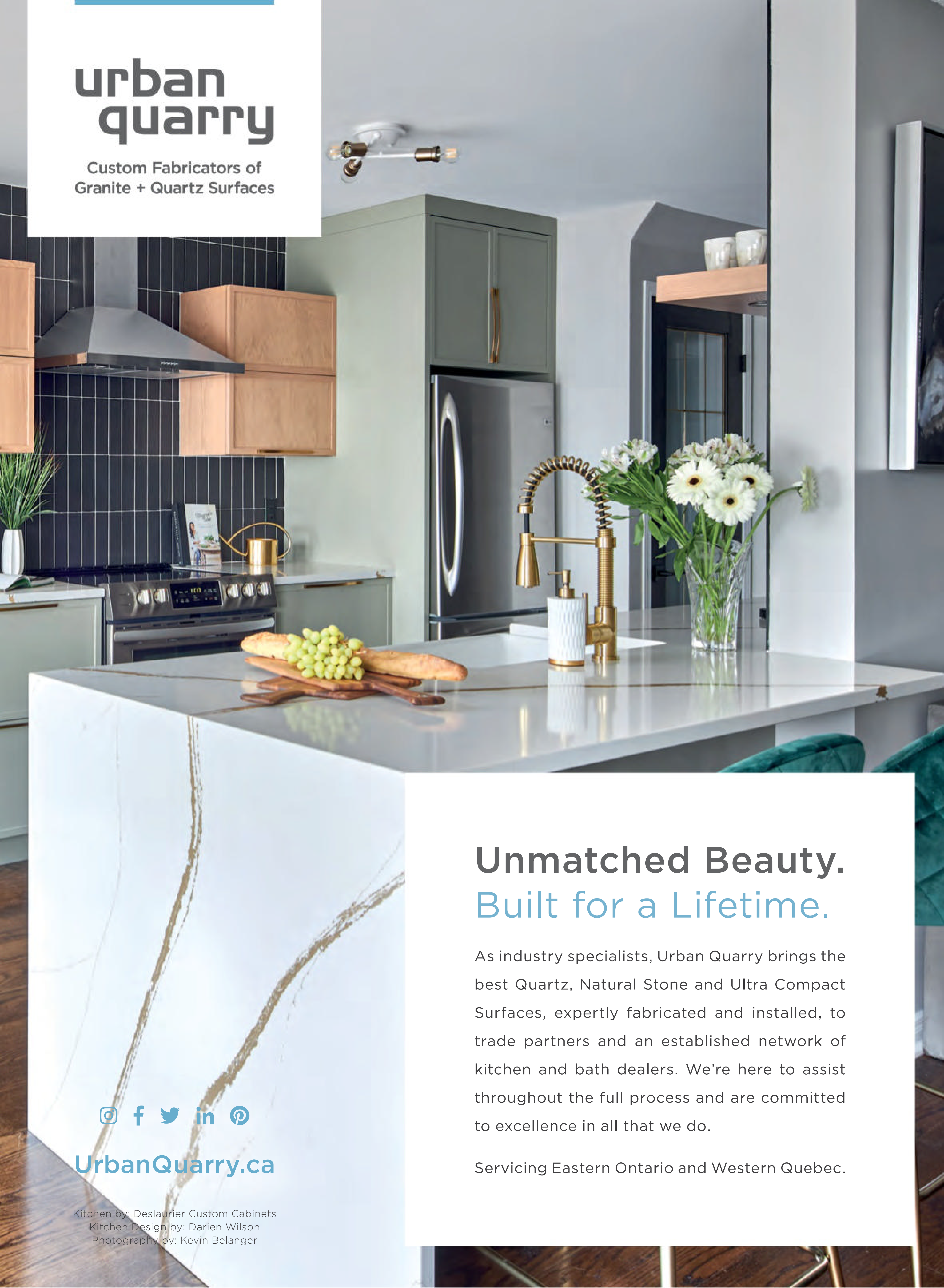
PHOTOGRAPH BY JUSTIN VAN LEEUWEN

HERITAGE HEROES

The City of Ottawa recently rewarded those looking to save and restore Ottawa's built heritage with their biennial **Heritage Awards**. Among the winners was the Embassy of Estonia, for their restoration of an old stone house at 168 Daly Ave. in Sandy Hill. Work done by RMA+SH Architects saw the building stripped of additions built up over the years and added a porch and *porte-cochère*, in keeping with original designs, while incorporating contemporary security needs.

Over the river in Gatineau at Zibi, on the former E.B. Eddy site, the jury recognized the Beater Building, one of only two buildings that remain as witnesses to the industrial nature of the former paper mill. The project, handled by Hobin Architecture, Fotenn Planning + Design, Zibi, Theia Partners, and Eddy Lands Construction celebrates the site's industrial significance while honouring the traditional Algonquin Anishinaabe territory on which it stands. Red brick on the south and east façades from the 1900s remained largely intact, while the new west- and north-facing exteriors feature a modern industrial style with black metal siding and swaths of glass.

Most surprising is a heritage award for a new building. A winner in the infill category, the red brick units at 189 Stanley Ave. are front-to-back semi-detached homes, on a wide lot. Praised by the jury for its "contextual urban design, material palette, and stylistic gestures, all of which take their cues from the neighbourhood," this infill development is proof that densification and visual compatibility are achievable goals. ●



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City Bites

Here's the beef: Sumptuous beef short ribs are served with rough-[illegible] pappardelle noodles and braised [illegible]

PHOTOGRAPHY BY MARC FOWLER - METROPOLIS STUDIO

Artful fare

Things are looking up in the world of menus at our esteemed galleries and museums. With unique interior spaces, not to mention a steady stream of people, restaurants located in our national institutions are increasingly focusing on local food and simple, healthy plates. At the bistro inside the National Gallery of Canada, shown here, salads and sandwiches feature upscale ingredients such as avocado and smoked salmon. Find out more in *Exhibits with taste*, p. 84.

City Bites Insider | By Hattie Klotz

Chef Brianna Kim at work inside Alice, the high end vegan restaurant she opened in 2019. Earlier this year, Kim won first place at the Canadian Culinary Championships

PHOTOGRAPHY BY CHRISTIAN LALONDE / PHOTOLUXSTUDIO.COM

Kim wins

There's nothing like a victory on home turf. **Brianna Kim**, owner, chef and creative genius at Alice restaurant, took the gold medal at the Canadian Culinary Championships held in Ottawa in February. Her winning dish was an onion tuile, smoked potatoes, rhubarb jerky, maitake mushrooms, pickled onion, dill, lacto-fermented green tomato and koji broth. Congratulations Brianna!

Closing time

Sad news on the restaurant front; eclectic, eccentric and much-loved Gatineau restaurant **Les Vilains Garçons** closed at the end of March. The owners, who have been in business since 2014, have also put their butcher shop and mobile food truck up for sale. As if this wasn't enough bad news, Ottawa's oldest sushi restaurant, **C'est Japon à Suisha**, which opened in 1974, will also be closing its doors at the end of June, due in part to the redevelopment of the Slater Street building into condominiums. Not so old, but no less mourned, will be **Shelby Burger** on William Street in the ByWard Market. The gourmet smashed burger restaurant closed in February.

More Bottega

But where one door closes, another opens. Gourmet Italian delicatessen **La Bottega Nicastro** in the Byward Market is opening a second location, in Gatineau. La Bottega will be offering a coffee bar, pastries, gourmet panini and all the pantry essentials at 199 rue Laurier. Meanwhile, on George Street in Ottawa, they've teamed up with gourmet preserves company **Michael's Dolce**, who makes a tasty 72-hour fermented sourdough pizza crust. It's now available on Fridays, layered with lots of La Bottega goodies.

Sweet treats

There's plenty of exciting news for those with a sweet tooth. **Suzy Q donuts** is branching out — those sinful circles of sugary joy — are now available Saturdays at **Split Tree Mixers**, 98-J Richmond Road. And in February, **Lollies and Scoops** opened in Manotick (1160 Beaverwood Rd.) The family-owned store offers a global selection of mouth-watering candy, from saltwater taffy and raw cookie dough, to vegan chocolate, spicy gummy bears, carnival sweets, and Sherbet Dips from the U.K. It's sure to bring childhood memories flooding back. Meanwhile, boutique and bespoke cotton candy maker **Flossie** also launched in early February. Flossie comes in a dozen flavours of rainbow coloured candy floss and is available by mail order and at Alicja Confections (303 Richmond Rd.). Packaged in sturdy, semi-rigid pouches, the sweet treasure won't get squished in the mail. Meanwhile over in Merrickville, cookie lovers can now get their fix at the **Cookie Kiosk**. Located at 241 County Road 41, it offers super-sized cookies – over four inches in diameter and one inch thick — as well as cookie pies.

Craving savoury

Almanac Grain (9-5510 Canotek Rd.) now offers frozen pizza pockets. Available in vegetarian and meat-filled options, they're the perfect snack on the go — nostalgic, but with none of the bad stuff. Owner Gabrielle Prud'homme is also offering sourdough classes, to teach you how to keep your "mother" happy. And if you're going to be baking more, you can sign up for Almanac Flour Power points to unlock baking rewards.

Halal pizza anyone?

Good Thymes Pizza (1087 Wellington St. W.) is now available from the folks at Bibis Middle Eastern Cuisine. With a sourdough crust, cooked to crispy goodness in a wood-fired oven, why not make it a chicken shawarma pizza, complete with French fries?

QUICK BITES

- Big congratulations to **Steven Beckta**! It's been 20 years in May since he first opened the doors to his eponymous restaurant on Nepean Street. Let's hope his two other restaurants — Gezellig and Play Food and Wine — celebrate the same milestone.

- Ottawa-based wine writer and podcaster **Natalie MacLean** was named the World's Best Drinks Writer at the World Food Media Awards, and has won four James Beard Foundation Journalism Awards. The author of two previous wine-themed books, MacLean has just published a memoir: *Wine Witch on Fire: Rising from the Ashes of Divorce, Defamation, and Drinking Too Much*. Notwithstanding the title, MacLean promises that it's an Ottawa story with plenty of humour.

- Having trouble getting a last-minute table? Try **DINR**. Now back in Ottawa, DINR will help you procure a table for that impromptu date at some of Ottawa's top dining spots: Riviera, Perch, Stofa, North & Navy and Parlour are among the restaurants listed.

- Great news for gin lovers in the region. **La Distillerie du Square** is coming to Old Chelsea. After three years of construction, the distillery, which is due to open later this year, will feature a gift shop with spirits and accessories, guided tours, tasting rooms, and a small spirits museum. The distillery's first product, Gin du Jardin, is already for sale through the SAQ. Billed as a taste of Quebec, it is made with Quebec corn and ingredients foraged in the Outaouais. Owner Manuela Teixeira has established a partnership with Wakefield farm Ferme et Forêt, to cultivate juniper berries for the spirit. ●

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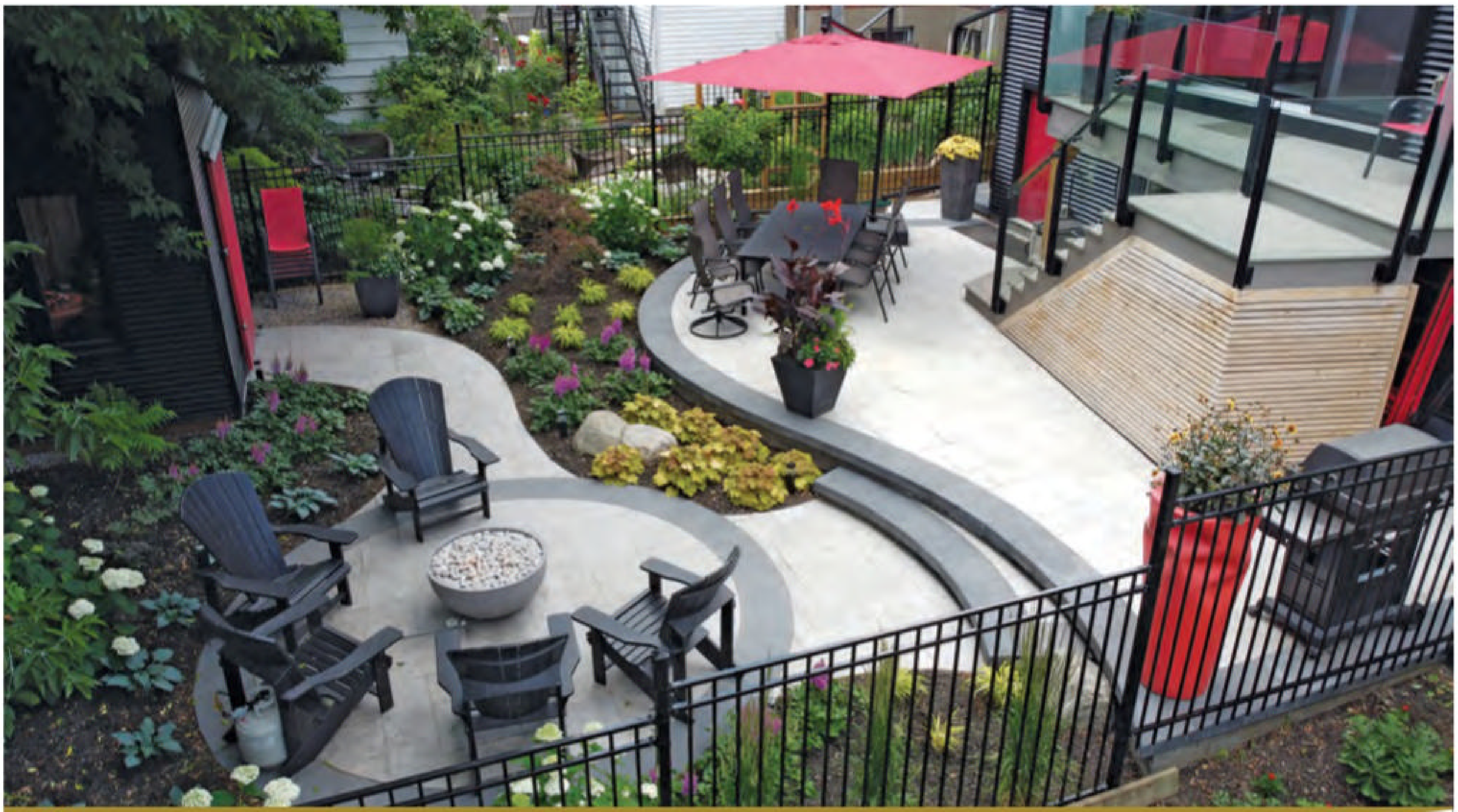

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Inspired outdoor living

Found | Working with the grain

As demand for artisanal bread and craft beer continues to grow, **Hattie Klotz** meets the people building Ontario's small-scale grain sector from the ground up

BEFORE THE DAYS WHEN AIR FREIGHT brought mangoes, strawberries, and avocados to our stores year-round, and before a globalized food system raised our expectations to absurd heights — dark red cherries at Christmas, sushi spotted far from any ocean — we ate what was produced locally.

In a limited way, those who shop at farmer's markets and subscribe to CSA deliveries do this now, to the extent that the Canadian climate allows. However, when it comes to flour and bread, this has always been more difficult. Grains, mostly produced over thousands of acres of monoculture and plied with environmentally harmful fertilizers and pesticides, are shipped worldwide, severing the link between producer and consumer. For our daily bread, it has been nearly impossible to know your farmer.

However, Gabrielle Prud'homme, the owner and baker at Almanac Urban Mill and Bakery is endeavouring to change this. "We are working with small growers to transform what comes off their fields into good food for people close by," she says, "to rebuild a local grain economy."

Prud'homme founded Almanac Urban Mill in 2019, selling freshly milled flour made from heritage grains at farmer's markets and through specialty stores. In 2021, mid-pandemic, she added a sourdough-driven bakery location in the Canotek Business Park. All the grains that she mills for flour come from Canadian-grown heritage wheat and grain varieties, such as Red Fife, originally developed in Peterborough, Ont., in the 1840s. And she's finding the network for these grains is building in eastern Ontario.

"Almanac's mission is to deliver good food by supporting better farming," says Prud'homme. "We're doing this by seeking out regional farmers following restorative agricultural practices that promote environmental resiliency, with a view to conserving the land for future generations."

Nate Heuvel is one such farmer. Heuvel, who met Prud'homme at a market, farms 70 acres near Spencerville, Ont., and harvested nearly 40 tonnes of grain for her during the 2022 season. For 2023, he'll be planting buckwheat, spring rye, winter rye, and Red Fife wheat.

However, Heuvel has found his own gaps in the local grain economy. The equipment for seed cleaning is expensive and hard to come by. But it is particularly necessary as these organic grains come off the field with weeds among them, which need to be removed. "If we put the work in now and solve these problems, the local grain industry could become an incredible market to buy, sell, and work in," says Heuvel.

Prud'homme also buys spelt from Sonset Farm near Inverary, Ont., and is in discussion with several other local farmers, including one near Wakefield, Que. "Working with local farmers is a more intimate experience," Prud'homme says. "I can let them know when things change, when, say, there's too much moisture. In that way, I can really get to know the flour and how the weather, the seasons, affect it."

Prud'homme mills her flour between two massive round discs of granite, which are rough and scoured with grooves. These marks on the stones — called lands and furrows — act like knives, grinding the grain into smaller and smaller pieces, eventually producing flour. After two years of constant use, they recently needed sharpening.

PHOTO COURTESY OF DOMINION CITY BREWING

But first time around, Prud'homme wasn't quite sure how to accomplish this. Anthony Togeretz from Brodflour in Toronto came to the rescue, sharing his knowledge, with the understanding that Prud'homme will in turn pass it on to the next miller who may be stumped. The pair spent a day lifting the 1,000-pound stones using a small crane that comes with the mill, flipping them to reveal the grinding faces. Then they used a tool similar to a pneumatic hammer to dress the stones, roughing up the smooth surfaces, making tiny holes.

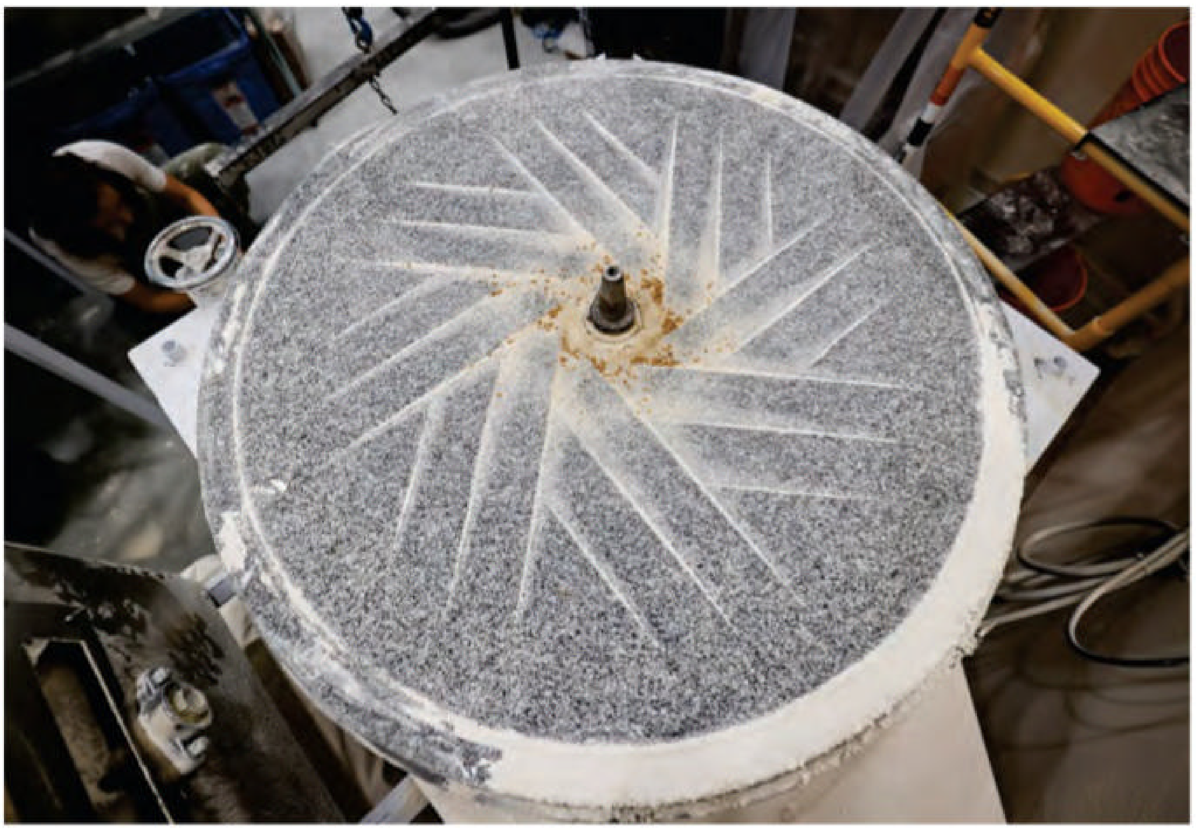
"This was all part of the 'missing middle,'" says Josh McJannet, Prud'homme's partner and co-owner of Dominion City Brewery just next door. He's been watching the knowledge and supply gaps that hamper the cycle from producer to consumer in the grain sector. For his own beer business, McJannet is working on plugging another supply chain hole: the one between barley-grower and maltster, that essential product for craft brewers.

Dean Bowes is a farmer and owner of Mississippi Mills Malting Company in Pakenham, Ont. He produces 2.5 tonnes of malt weekly, and sells to many local breweries, including Dominion City, as well as small distilleries. "All of our barley comes from within a tractor drive from our malthouse," says Bowes. "We grow about half of our annual production, and a few of our neighbours grow the rest. We plan for roughly 200 acres of barley annually to supply our malthouse, with plans for future growth."

"We believe that a mill, even a small one like ours, has the power to transform the relationship in a community between people, food, farmers, and the environment for the better," says McJannet. "We think bringing back this simple, ancient machine has the power to transform our local food system by making it possible to grow grains to make bread to feed people in a small, closed loop right here in our own backyard."

And the same is true for beer. Good beer, good bread, made right here, with raw materials produced from 100 km of Ottawa. This defines truly local food. ●

PHOTOS COURTESY OF ALMANAC URBAN MILL



Left: Scott Denyer, Dominion City head brewer, with Dean Bowes from Mississippi Mills Malting Company in a barley field at the Mississippi Mills farm

Above: Gabrielle Prud'homme, owner of Almanac Urban Mill and Bakery, uses a granite mill to grind whole grains. When the large machine recently required sharpening, she reached out to others in the industry for guidance

Right: The end result of growing grain and milling it locally? Great tasting bread that not only feeds people but also supports small farmers

Food for Thought | Exhibits with taste

While Ottawa may not be a sophisticated metropolis that compares with London, Paris, or Rome, it is still the national capital, and as such is blessed with excellent museums and galleries, as well as some really good food. But as **Hattie Klotz** learns, it can be difficult to find the two under the same roof

A FULFILLING COUPLE OF DAYS can easily be spent wandering among masterpieces from across the centuries at the National Gallery of Canada or strolling beside the massive antique crafts at the Aviation Museum. The Canadian War Museum offers a quiet sanctum for contemplating the horrors and sorrows of conflict, while heritage and culture (not to mention a busy children's museum) await at the Canadian Museum of History. But in only one of these august institutions will you find a decent meal — food for the body, having nourished the soul.

Let's start with the best. Food at the national gallery is being provided by My Catering Group, a local privately-owned company that has previously handled large events for thousands of people such as the U.S. Embassy Fourth of July party in 2022 and the Centre Block closing party in 2018. Last year, they won the contract for catering at the National Gallery of Canada, the Canadian War Museum, and the Canadian Museum of History. At the national gallery, a small kitchen and self-serve area offers lively salad bowls such as Thai noodle, cobb, Caesar and quinoa, alongside sandwiches, fruit salad, yoghurt, and granola cups. There's also a short menu of hot items, including a tasty spinach and feta pie, drizzled with honey and sprinkled with chives — crispy phyllo pastry, creamy filling. A side of smashed baby potatoes, swimming in a pool of chimichurri and topped with fresh parmesan cheese, and a perfectly acidic mixed salad with fennel and radishes, made this lunch fit for any of the kings and queens hanging on the walls nearby. A burger, the largest and therefore most expensive item on the menu at $20, was also excellent. With a generous patty, oozing melted smoked cheddar, red onions, tomato and lettuce, all sandwiched into a toasted, soft brioche bun, it was worth every cent.

But there's a caveat; it's a pity that the gallery is serving such fine food on polystyrene plates with plastic cutlery. This is not an airplane, but Ottawa's premier museum, one that should aspire to offer a visitor experience on a par with other national capitals and cultural hot spots. However, given the quality of the food and the lovely atrium with views out over the river in which to enjoy it, it's worth a visit.

Next is the restaurant at the Canadian Museum of History, equally blessed with stunning views out over the river and a large, sun-filled terrace, as well as a dining room reminiscent of a school canteen. Salads and sandwiches on offer are the same as those at the national gallery, but the hot menu caters to a younger palette, to accommodate visitors to the Canadian Children's Museum. Poutine and chicken tenders aside, the made-to-order Reuben sandwich on multigrain bread is excellent, even if the fries are a little greasy.

Then we get to the rest. Offerings at the war museum, the third establishment under the My Catering Group umbrella are similar to those at the history museum, but for some reason appear as moribund as the dark space itself, although a pair of chicken tacos is palatable.

At the Canadian Museum of Nature, the Canadian Aviation and Space Museum, and the Canada Science and Technology Museum, you'd be better off bringing a packed lunch. A selection of prepared sandwiches, snack boxes, and cookies from The Urban Element are uninspiring. A beef sandwich, at nearly $15, gets the thumbs down from my husband and children, condemned as dry and uninspiring.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY MARC FOWLER - METROPOLIS STUDIO

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Drink | The low and no trend

Experts agree: a world of benefits and flavours come with reduced alcohol consumption. **Yvonne Langen** surveys the scene — and offers a refreshing recipe

IN JANUARY, THE CANADIAN CENTRE ON Substance Abuse and Addiction (CCSA) released *Canada's Guidance on Alcohol and Health* and set the beverage world abuzz. The new guidance is the culmination of a two-year Health Canada project and takes an abstinence-first approach to alcohol consumption, indicating that zero drinks per week is the safest option.

Two drinks per week is defined as a low-risk consumption level — a staggering decline from the 10 drinks per week for women and 15 for men in the previous CCSA guidance, released in 2011.

The new report and the science backing it is not without its critics. Are Canadians going to put down the pinot or pop another bottle?

An Abacus Data survey of 1,500 Canadians in mid-January found that 16 per cent intend to drink less because of the new guidance.

Over the past few years, you may have seen more mocktails popping up on menus across the city. They can be found labelled "zero-proof" and "driving cocktails," or even "temperance cocktails."

At Atelier, they're called "placebos." For the 44-course tasting menu at the fine dining establishment on Rochester Street, guests have the option of pairing their meal with wine, cocktails, or placebos.

General manager and head sommelier Bernard Joseph Lemoyne says the restaurant first introduced its non-alcoholic program two years ago. He says the non-alcoholic options preserve the same high standard they've established with their carefully curated wine pairing.

"We submitted tasting notes to our bar manager Ramon Renderos Soto. We tasted the wines alongside him to get an idea of the flavour profiles, the structures of the wines, the acidity, tannin — and how that would affect the courses that are being paired. He took those general parameters and built cocktails and placebos to try and mimic that."

I asked Lemoyne how interest in the placebo pairing has evolved over time.

"Not only with Dry January but also Health Canada coming out [with the new guidance], as well as a general growing interest in mixed beverages, both cocktails and mocktails, we've definitely seen an uptick," he says. "Add to that, everyone feeling a financial pinch with interest rates being as high as they are … it provides a more affordable option where you don't feel like you're compromising on having a good time out."

Cool Hand Cuke

By Yvonne Langen

First, make thyme syrup by combining ½ cup sugar, ½ cup water, and ½ tbsp dried thyme in a small saucepan over medium heat. Simmer, stirring often, until sugar is dissolved. Remove from heat and cool to room temperature. Strain through a fine-mesh sieve lined with a coffee filter into a sealable container. Set aside.

- *1 oz fresh cucumber juice*
- *1 oz Seedlip Spice 94*
- *¾ oz lemon juice*
- *¾ oz thyme syrup*
- *Club soda, to top*
- *Garnish: cucumber ribbon and lemon peel*

- Add all ingredients to a cocktail shaker with ice. Shake until well-chilled.
- Strain into an ice-filled highball glass. Top with club soda.
- Garnish with a cucumber ribbon rolled into a rose and skewered on a cocktail pick and a swath of lemon peel.

Placebos are priced at $20 apiece, a savings of $10 per drink compared to the signature full-proof cocktails.

If you're experiencing sticker shock at the cost of a placebo cocktail, you shouldn't be. Benson Mutalemwa, owner of Knyota Non-Alcoholic Drinks, Ottawa's first zero-proof bottle shop, explains: "The simple fact is that there's more work that gets done on these products than a typical beverage with alcohol.

"You have to dealcoholize the wine, and then build back the character of the wine into something that comes close to resembling a wine," says Mutalemwa. "And the technology to dealcoholize is not cheap."

While he says the feedback on price does come up quite often, Mutalemwa says his store is seeing more new customers since the new CCSA guidance was released.

"Dry January was already underway, and the new guidelines came out mid-January … and then there were a lot more customers saying, 'I'm trying to figure out ways to reduce my overall consumption,' instead of customers just saying, 'I'm taking a break.'"

Whether you're looking to cut out, cut back, or just curious, check out this zero-proof cocktail recipe, above, to get you started.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY YVONNE LANGEN/TASTE & TIPPLE

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Where to Eat Now

By Yvonne Langen

Tasty terroir
The corner booth at Abby's looks onto Elgin Street, a great perch for people-watching, but the bar might be the best seat in the house — let the sommelier guide your wine selection

Abby's

283 Elgin St., harmonssteakhouse.com

At street level, beneath the sprawling expanse that is Harmon's Steakhouse on Elgin, you'll find a moody and intimate wine bar. Abby's, the latest addition to the Whalesbone Group family, serves up something a little different.

With an extensive list at a variety of price points available in three-ounce, five-ounce, or full bottle portions, the wine offerings are an exciting way to start. Expert service helps guests navigate uncharted terroir. If you're not in the mood for wine, Abby's can slake your thirst with one of several classic cocktails on tap or shake up something else à la minute.

The wine and cocktails are accompanied by a taut menu of smaller bites, sharing plates, skewers, and three larger dishes.

We started things off with the feta dip. A creamy bowl of briny whipped feta topped with heaps of fresh mint and pistachios, accompanied by slices of warm naan bread and cucumber — a simple and delicious opener.

We follow that up with a portion of the salt cod fritters, paired with a lemon paprika aioli. These oblong balls of deep-fried salt cod had a pleasant, crunchy exterior but might be better in slightly smaller portions as the texture of the filling was a bit wet, and the aioli could have packed more punch.

One section of the menu is dedicated to a variety of skewers. We tried a the A5 miyazaki wagyu, prawn, iberico pluma (Spanish pork loin), and the chicken thigh. All were tasty but the iberico pluma stood out — the delicate nutty flavour of the pork seared to perfection and topped with bright, herbal chimichurri. The wagyu skewer melted in our mouths, but for the $15 price tag it was marginally underwhelming in terms of flavour complexity.

For the main course: roasted cauliflower. A whole head of charred cauliflower nestled into caramelized cauliflower purée, dotted with pickled raisins, slivered almonds, and a dusting of Padano cheese. My dining companion loved this dish, but I thought a touch more acidity would improve balance.

Abby's, like many restaurants in the wake of the pandemic, could benefit from a few more staff. On our last visit, one server took orders, educated guests, and made drinks — one other staff assisted by bringing food and clearing tables. Another capable server with great wine knowledge could help the pace of service.

It is still is well worth a visit for would-be oenophiles and anyone else seeking out a cozy place with great music and excellent small plates.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY MELODY MALONEY

Torta Boyz

60A Lebreton St.

The neon signage of Torta Boyz beckons guests from its perch amongst tightly packed houses on a residential stretch of Lebreton Street. It's a casual dining destination that serves up great atmosphere and the vibrant flavours of Mexican street food in approachable formats. Hearty handhelds called "tortas" headline the menu and are complemented by a selection of sharing plates and smaller bites.

This unsuspecting industrial space at the south end of Chinatown is overflowing with good vibes. Interior red lights cast a warm glow on the sidewalk and catches the attention of curious passers-by. Once inside, an up-tempo playlist of Latin pop and rap will have you shoulder-dancing in your seat as you sip on a spicy margarita or tuck into a heaping basket of asada fries.

Initially launched as a food truck on Preston Street in 2021, owners Luis Guerra and Moudy Husseini quickly outgrew their setting, with hordes of hungry diners eager to sink their teeth into the toothsome Mexican sandwiches on offer.

Their bricks-and-mortar location serves the same staples that locals came to know and love, in addition to an expanded menu featuring tacos, churros, and agave-based cocktails.

On our last visit, my dining partner and I kicked things off with orders of pork and fish tacos. The former featured unctuous pork prepared al pastor style, topped with creamy avocado, pineapple, and a bright salsa verde. The fish dish with cabbage, avocado, and chipotle mayo smeared on beer-battered haddock tastes great, but may have spent just a little too long in the fryer, as the breading was more crunchy than crispy.

We paired the opening dishes with a spicy margarita and hibiscus mezcal margarita respectively. The spicy margarita was too mild to merit its moniker and slightly over-diluted. The latter was more successful, a well-balanced composition of smoke, floral notes, and acidity.

The asada fries are another transplant from the food truck days and involve a large basket of perfectly cooked fries topped with cilantro, onion, guacamole, pico de gallo, crema, cotija, and salsa. These hit every high note on the palate and are completely addictive — and they are generously portioned for shareability.

For the main course, we split a carne asada torta. The AAA top sirloin was cooked to perfection, served on savoury Mexican bread, slathered with queso, chimichurri, cabbage slaw, chipotle mayo, and avocado. Juices ran down our chins as we greedily devoured this dish.

We finished with an order of bite-sized churros which were cute but suffered a similar fate to the fish: too much time in the fryer.

Torta Boyz makes dining fun and unpretentious. The food and atmosphere are joyful, approachable, and best enjoyed in good company. You might get a little messy trying to nab that last fry or biting into a juicy sandwich, but that's what napkins are for.

Bright bites
The open kitchen at Torta Boyz is as colourful as the food that comes out of it. The shotgun layout of the restaurant brings a convivial atmosphere

ME SENTE A ESPERAR POR TI PERO LLEGARON POR MI

Voice | Hope on the horizon

“I JUST CONSIDER MYSELF VERY LUCKY.”

Jackie, a 60-year-old mother of two, is describing her experience at a new community mental health clinic opened by the Royal Ottawa Health Care Group.

About 40 years ago, Jackie started hearing, seeing, feeling, and even smelling things that didn’t exist. The delusions, combined with her depression and mood swings, were diagnosed as schizoaffective disorder. With medication and support, she now leads a normal life, but in January her previous symptoms were in danger of flaring up.

“I was very close to being admitted,” she recalls, describing how moving house was causing her stress. That prevented her from sleeping — a common problem for people diagnosed with schizophrenia spectrum disorders. “The symptoms become more amplified.”

In the past, Jackie would have no choice but to go to an emergency room, and, from there, possibly be referred to the Royal Ottawa Mental Health Centre. She bypassed that route this time, thanks to the Ozerdinc Grimes Family Regional Psychosis Clinic, located on the ground floor of the City Centre complex just west of the downtown core.

“I just phoned,” says Jackie. “I was talking to my nurse and explaining that I had had no sleep, that I could not sleep.” She was seen the next day. “It was dealt with very quickly and very efficiently,” she says. “Within about a week my sleeping patterns got back to normal again.”

According to clinic director Dr. David Attwood, there are around 11,000 people in the Ottawa area with schizophrenia disorders. The clinic, he says, is for people who need more care than a family doctor provides, but don’t need intensive treatment in a hospital setting. He says the majority of people affected are in this “middle territory.”

At the Ozerdinc clinic, a range of services are offered, from medication injections to cognitive behavioral therapy. Patients needing monthly blood work benefit from a simplified process requiring only a prick on the finger, compared to the usual needle in the arm.

Patients need to be referred by other health care providers, but Attwood says walk-in service may be offered in the future. “We want patients who are voluntarily seeking care. We don’t want anybody to be forced to come here for care.”

His goal is to help about 1,000 new patients enrolled over the next three to five years. He expects many of them may never have received treatment before. “The schizophrenia world is a big tent,” he says. “We know there are a lot of people out there that need help and are struggling to get it. We want to be approachable. We want to get people who traditionally struggled to access care.”

The look and location of the clinic (compared to the Royal Ottawa) is part of its appeal, according to clinical nurse specialist Lisa Murata. “I know people sometimes say they don’t want to get off the bus in front of the hospital, so they get off a stop ahead,” she says. But she notes this place could easily pass for any kind of dental or walk-in clinic. “They come in the door and go, ‘Wow,’ ” she adds.

Neighbouring businesses include a brewery, art gallery and pool hall. There is a patient art group, and Murata has already started forging links with the gallery. She also anticipates taking groups for outings to the pool hall. “By being in the community, it just makes it more accessible to people,” she says. Being well-connected to the Ottawa River and LRT, she adds, make walking groups an easy social activity.

Attwood has long dreamed of establishing this kind of clinic. Three previous funding applications were not successful. This time he got support from Ersin Ozerdinc and Kathleen Grimes, a husband-and-wife team in the construction business who have a long history of philanthropy. They donated $2.5 million, the lion’s share of the initial funding.

Grimes realized the need for the clinic after an immediate family member developed schizophrenia. She was shocked to discover how difficult it is to get care from an overwhelmed system. “I had to be very aggressive to ensure he got the care he needed,” she says. “No one should have to go through what I went through to get care for their loved one.”

The initial funding will eventually run out; Attwood says the goal now is proving the clinic’s effectiveness to the Ontario Ministry of Health so it will — hopefully — qualify for long-term financial support.

“We believe we can cut down on emergency room visits. We believe we can facilitate people getting discharged from hospital. We believe we can keep people out of the hospital once they are discharged,” he says.

For Jackie, one of those goals has already been met. She didn’t need to be hospitalized. “Having the clinic, it gave me the opportunity to deal with it on the outside.” ●

Simon Gardner is a writer, photographer and videographer who spent close to 30 years reporting Ottawa news for the CBC.

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